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The
King of Men



"The Light of the World"







The King of Men.



*Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ?
thou hast the words of eternal life.—JOHN vi. 68.*

The
KING OF MEN
THE BLANK IN HIS HISTORY,
ITS
FILLING UP & LESSONS.

BY

ROBERT KERR,

Author of "Sacred Hours by Living Streams" &c. &c.



ARDBOSSAN: ARTHUR GUTHRIE.

LONDON: HOULSTON & SONS.

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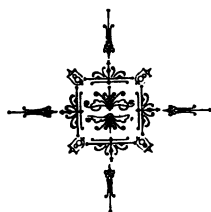
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TO
THE MEMBERS OF
Young Men's Christian Associations,
IN
WHOSE WORK AND WELFARE
HE TAKES
A SPECIAL INTEREST,
THIS ESSAY IN HONOUR OF HIM
WHOSE
SACRED NAME THEY BEAR,
IN THE HOPE
THAT IT MAY HELP THEM TO LOVE HIM MORE,
TO SERVE HIM BETTER,
AND
TO GROW LIKER HIM IN ALL THINGS,
IS MOST
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY

The Author.



P R E F A C E .

THIS volume originated in the delivery of a discourse, during the Author's ordinary ministry in Scotland, from a rough outline on the words, "Is not this the Carpenter?" and the drift of which was to exhibit Christ as the Model Working Man, and to show his relations as such to the working men of all lands and times. Several ministers and literary gentlemen who heard it were kind enough to suggest that it should be more fully developed. The hint was taken; and the result now lies before the reader. The Author's aim has been to produce a treatise such as pastors and parents, teachers and employers, would like to put into the hands of thoughtful young men. For such he trusts there is a real blessing in the book, notwithstanding its many imperfections.

R. K.

*Congregational Church,
Mitchell, Iowa.*

C O N T E N T S.



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The King of Men in Obscurity.



P R E L U D E .



"THOUGH truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of HIM who made them current coin.

"For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth, embodied in a tale,
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

"And so the WORD had breath, and wrought
With human hands, the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

"Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
Or those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef."

Tennyson.



CHAPTER I.

THE KING OF MEN IN OBSCURITY.




IN these latter days much has been said and written about "Heroes and Hero Worship;" and one, who is deeply versed in such subjects, and who offers the incense of enthusiastic devotion at the shrine of human greatness—namely, Emerson—thus calls upon us to join him in his adoration,—“I stand here to say, ‘let us worship the transcendent soul!’” So say we, but, first, tell us where he is to be found, that we may go and fall down and worship him; being previously satisfied that, in rendering such

homage, we shall not be guilty of idolatry. Where is he that has been born to such a kingship, and that is worthy to receive such a tribute as this?

Since the dawn of creation till this passing hour, of all the myriads and millions that have come and gone, and that still people the earth, only two have been real, Royal Men. The one began life in the most favourable circumstances. He opened his eyes on a world fresh from the hands of its Maker, free from corruption, radiant with beauty, and stored with everything fitted to supply his wants and minister to his happiness. In the conscious perfection of bodily and mental powers, in the vigour of immortality, with the crown of manhood on his brow, and the sceptre of universal dominion in his hand, he stepped forth at once, lord of the new-made earth. The other entered life in circumstances most unpropitious. He opened his eyes on a world blighted, cursed, and hoary with sin; full of wretchedness and woe. As a helpless babe, feeble and frail in body and mind; with all his


faculties and capacities as mere germs, needing to be nursed into maturity ; in the midst of abounding evil ; with the heritage of poverty for His lot and the doom of mortality for His fate, He began His earthly career. Yet the full-grown, perfect man of Eden has been eclipsed by the helpless Babe of Bethlehem. "The first man was of the earth, earthy ;" and his beauty was a fading flower. With his own hand he plucked the diadem from his brow, and with his own foot he trampled it in the dust ; and thus wrecked and ruined his own manhood and that of all his sons. "The second Man is the Lord from heaven," who, in the weakness of that little Child, perfected His strength, while for a time He concealed the glory of His Godhead. Out of that tiny form that lay cradled in the manger there grew up into a perfect man, in spite of all the adverse circumstances of His lot, and of all the mighty evil influences to which He was exposed, the only one of all our race whose head has never lost its crown. The glory of His manhood is immortal. A grander crown than



that which adorned the brow of unfallen Adam encircles for ever the head of the man Christ Jesus. Our human nature He has enthroned in Heaven. It is there glorified and made divine in Him. Adam was the head of the old humanity, whose manhood and all its primeval inheritance he sinned away. Jesus is the head of the new humanity, on whom He confers a nobler manhood and a richer inheritance than those of which they were robbed by Adam; a manhood which begins through spiritual union with Him on earth, and is to be perfected and crowned by Him with glory in Heaven. Only he who is competent to raise fallen man to such a character and destiny is worthy of their worship, and has a right to claim it.

The life of Him who has undertaken this mighty and unique work, is, therefore, full of vital moment and thrilling interest to our race. The marvel is that men are not found more generally engaged in the earnest, loving study of all the details and bearings of that wondrous life. So transcendent is His character; so many-

sided is His life; and so manifold and special are His personal relations to us, that it required four divinely inspired biographers to write His memoirs, and to give us something like a full and life-like portrait of their great subject. From the united labours of these sacred historians there shines forth upon the mind of the thoughtful, earnest reader, the living likeness of the One Perfect Man and "the image of the invisible God." It is Jehovah's testimony telling us how high the springs of the Divine life have risen in our sinful world through the medium of a human soul; and showing us how we, too, may become true men once more, and inherit a richer Paradise than our first father lost. And yet, though we learn so much from these brief memoirs respecting that noblest of all manly lives, and that sublimest revealment of Deity in human form, how much is left unsaid by these writers! The greatest portion of His history is unwritten; and of what He said and did during the three years of his public career we are supplied with only a few brief



fragments out of which to form a complete picture of the Son of God and Son of Man.

The world has always taken a special interest in the sayings and doings of great men. When any fresh anecdote regarding them comes to light, what a stir it makes ; and if an unpublished work of some famous author should happen to be discovered, what a treasure it is esteemed, and how eagerly College libraries and Museums, as well as printers, will compete for its possession ! So, with the devotion of true hero-worshippers, the Greeks did their best to preserve every utterance of their star-eyed Plato ; and Boswell, in recent times, followed the steps, and hung upon the lips, of Johnson, that he might catch every sentence that fell therefrom, and give it immortality. Because no special reporter undertook such a task in relation to the Great Teacher, we have been deprived of a fund of knowledge, and a wealth of wisdom, so great and precious as to make John say, using an Oriental hyperbole, " And there are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should

be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." The destruction of the Alexandrian Library with its 700,000 volumes was an immense and irreparable loss to the world. But, when we consider the worth of his words, and the grandeur of his deeds, that loss shrinks into utter insignificance in comparison with the deprivation we have sustained by the profound silence in which so much of our Saviour's earthly life is involved. When He himself assures that his words are spirit and life, we are inclined to say with H. W. Beecher, "The leaving out of these things from the New Testament, though Divinely wise, seems to my yearning, not so much the unaccomplishment of noble things, as the destruction of great treasures, which had already had oral life, but failed of incarnation in literature." That failure is irreparable.

On many strange and mysterious questions concerning the Almighty—his nature, attributes, relations, and designs, the mode of his being

and the method of his operations ; regarding the origin of evil ; respecting the locality and characteristics of the world to come, its different hemispheres, and the details of the life of souls dwelling there through eternity, which often stir the human mind, Scripture preserves a silence deep as death. Most remarkable, too, is its silence in regard to the greatest, and, in many respects, most important portion of the life of Jesus ; namely, that which lies between his twelfth and thirtieth years. After the young child's return from Egypt is recorded, we feel that we should like to pursue the narrative of his life, and watch his progress as time rolls on ; but the mystery of silence conceals him till He reaches the age of twelve, and appears in the Temple among the Doctors, hearing and asking them questions. That scene excites our interest and curiosity anew, and we are anxious to follow him back to Nazareth that we may observe all his movements, and study all the developments of his intellectual and moral nature as He emerges from childhood into youth, and from

youth into manhood ; for we are convinced that the grandest life of human kind was being gradually but surely unfolded there. But, beyond the simple, though comprehensive and suggestive statement,—“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man,”—nothing more is seen or heard of Him till He appears on the banks of the Jordan to receive baptism at the hands of His kinsman and forerunner before He begins His public ministry. From twelve till thirty remains a blank in His history. That long and interesting period of His life has for its chronicle the eloquence of unbroken silence.

This strange silence of Scripture in regard to His life at Nazareth must have been intentional. What could the design of it be ? That silence may have been preserved in order to keep the mere humanity of Jesus in the background, and thus to bring out His Divinity more fully and vividly to our view ; because we stand infinitely more in need of a Divine Redeemer, to save us from our sin and all its effects, than of a perfect

Brother, as the pattern of all moral excellence for the race ; and because sinful human nature has all along been prone to "worship the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." Doubtless, one end contemplated in the Mission of the Messiah was, to win back the alienated hearts and lives of men to render to the living God the worship due to him alone. His power to secure this is wondrous.

An eloquent American writer, Rev. Dr. Gardner, has said, "The silence of Scripture on things of less moment gives emphasis to its utterances on the great central doctrines of faith and life. Look at a great painting ; for instance Bierstadte's 'Domes of the Yo Semite.' It is only in the immediate foreground that any attempt is made to paint the grass, the flower, the moss on the rock. As the vista stretches away up the valley all these little details are lost in the generalization of the scene. The great arches recede in the overhanging cliffs ; the bald domes tower up on either side in their unique majesty ; and away up and on in the distance, the sky and

the cloud and the mountain all seem melting together into one billowy blue ocean of air. There is no attempt to represent the valleys that lie between those distant domes. There are ravines, and gorges, and, perhaps, broad *plateaus* hid away among the mountains. You know, as you gaze, that they are there ; but the pencil and the brush have rather concealed than tried to depict them. They do not now try to distract your admiration of the great groupings of nature, revealed only in their massive majesty, not in the details of minor beauty.

“It is just so with these Divine Revelations. They show us the spiritual world only in the grandeur of its outline facts, not in the details of their minor incidents. Take, for instance, the recorded life of Jesus Christ, and the progressive developments of Christian doctrine in the writings of the Apostles. Only in the foreground of His infancy do we find any of the outer incidents of His life detailed. There are the manger, the star, the shepherds, the magi,—a little group of facts that lend colour and vividness to the

whole picture. Twelve years away there stands out, isolated in all its surroundings, one suggestive scene. Here a revealing ray, as a rift in the overhanging cloud, lights the picture a little. Then, eighteen years away in the distance, rise up in all their majesty and glory, but enveloped in cloud all about their bases, the mighty facts of His life and death. And still on, partly in the mist, and partly in the sunlight, the mountain domes of Christian doctrine raise their sun-lit crests high up toward God. Thus mingled, the light of revelation and the shade of concealment make a picture more vivid, and grand, and real, than could have been secured by a flood of light that should, in the attempt to reveal all, have obscured all by its dazzle. God's revelations are adjusted to human eyes."

The same author says, "This silence is also prohibitive. To be venturesome here is to be presumptuous. No man or body of men, council or Church, may presume to fill the gaps of Scripture. All positive doctrine—all immutable ordinances—all direct and definite duties must

rest, not on the silence, but on the utterances of Scripture." And he quotes the words of Whately,—“As to such points we should not only seek for no explanation in Scripture, but should carefully abstain from the presumption of any enquiry whatever.” There is all the force of true wisdom and reverence in these remarks, in so far as they relate to the attempt to rear theological dogmas and religious rites on speculations drawn from the silence of the Divine Word. Perish all such attempts! And let those who make them be branded as the impious foes of God and the souls of men.

But the silence of Scripture regarding the life of Christ, while it is in some respects, and on various points, no doubt, prohibitory, is, at the same time, most suggestive and instructive. It is, doubtless, intended by the Holy Spirit to act, not only as an appeal to the imagination, but as a strong incentive to the devout study of that marvellous life as it is exhibited to us in the inspired records. It seems designed to excite the spirit of enquiry that we may so search into what is

there revealed concerning him, as to be enabled thereby to fill up in thought the blank pages of his history, and make the silence that conceals him, especially from twelve to thirty, eloquent with richest lessons to ourselves. In no venturesome or presumptuous mood would we attempt to break that silence, seeking to draw from its depths, by the aid of a fervid and fertile, but unsanctified imagination, another Apocryphal Gospel, bearing on its front the proofs of its impiety and falsehood, and the ground of its own condemnation. We have no wish to bring down upon ourselves the terrible curse pronounced against those who dare to add to or take anything from what is written in "the volume of the Book," and we have no desire to prove ourselves "fools" by "rushing in where angels fear to tread." But, perfectly content to hold by what is written in the new Testament regarding Him who is "the desire of all nations," and the central theme of all Revelation, by a careful examination of the same, we think the chasm may be bridged, the gap filled

up, and the silence that reigns over those eighteen years may be made vocal with His praise. In presence of the light that streams from the facts of His early youth and public ministry, the darkness that rests upon that important section of His life vanishes; and He stands before us the real and unmistakeable Representative of all true working men. It looks as if the Divine Spirit had withheld the particulars of that section of His life on purpose to make us thoughtfully and reverently study Him in this special aspect of His character, and learn the personal and practical relations which He sustains, in that capacity, to the working men of all lands and times, that we may get an inspiration to hallow and ennoble all useful labour by imitating Him.

We yield to none in venerating the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, for thereon our hopes for time and eternity depend. But we think it is possible to keep exhibiting so exclusively the glory of His Godhead as to hide the glory of His manhood. We fear this has often been done; and, well meant though it has been, it has exerted a repel-

ling instead of a winning influence on the minds of many earnest, thoughtful men. Depend upon it, we do not honour Him by merely representing Him as a Being altogether and infinitely transcending our own nature; so great and glorious that, however much we may aspire after nobility of character and grandeur of destiny, we can never hope to approach, or hold intercourse with Him. To regard Him simply and only as God, is to create a great gulf between our needy souls and the fulness of blessing that is treasured up for us in Him. He is true God; but He is also true man. He is our brother in the highest and holiest sense; and He stands ever at our side, seeking to uphold and defend us in our struggles with all the ills of time, and anxious to raise us to the same nobleness of character that distinguishes Himself. Through His peerless humanity we can see and prove His divinity. Through the Man we can draw nigh to God; for "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." And, ever and anon, as men attempt to explain away the

mysterious duality in the person of His Son, or to place Him on an equality with common fallen mortals, God brings master-minds to the front to prove by fresh and original arguments the Divine personality and claims of Christ. But "*Ecce Homo*" is as necessary as "*Ecce Deus*" to do Him justice in His complex nature and relations. While the latter is needed to directly exhibit His perfect Deity, the former is needed to display His perfect manhood; and from that to lead us to infer that He must be more than human, and, therefore, Divine. Unquestionably, to honour Him aright, we must hold Him forth to the eyes of the world, and earnestly cry, "Behold your God!" And as earnestly must we add, "Behold the Man!" There seems, however, to be sufficient room and reason for a distinct exposition of the manhood of Christ in relation to working men, as such. It may be fairly questioned whether, as their one true Brother and Example, He has been as fully and lovingly commended to the admiration of their intelligence, the appreciation of their conscien-

ces, the love of their hearts, and the imitation of their lives as He should have been ; as He ardently desires to be, as their manifold wants require, or as His character, relations, and claims demand and deserve. Did they but know Him aright in this special capacity, we are impressed with the conviction that it would gladden their hearts, elevate their character, increase their usefulness, and lighten their burdens, their trials, and their toils. It would produce a blessed revolution in their hearts, and homes, and lives. Theirs would be the benefit, and His would be the praise. Oh, for power to do something like justice to the theme !





The King of Men in Poverty.



Why seeks He not a home of rest ?
Why seeks He not a pillowed bed ?
Beasts have their dens, the bird its nest,
He hath "not where to lay His head."
Such was the lot He freely chose
To bless, to save the human race ;
And through His poverty there flows
A rich, full stream of heavenly grace.

Russell



CHAPTER II.

THE KING OF MEN IN POVERTY.



T is at once curious and instructive to observe, how frequently in the course of time the foes of truth have unwittingly proved its real friends; and how their attempts to crush it have been the very means that hastened its triumph: in which facts are plainly revealed the over-rulings of Providence, making the opposition of men self-defeating, and, at the same time, subservient to His own purposes of wisdom and love. "He makes the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder thereof He restrains."

Thanks to His enemies, they are the first to break the silence that broods over that lengthened section of Messiah's life which we wish now more particularly to consider. Familiarity with Him and His relatives not only created in their minds a prejudice against Him, which blinded them to His true greatness; it engendered in their hearts the spirit of unrighteous anger, and bitter contempt, which soon found vent in burning words. We read that, shortly after He began His ministry, "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke iv. 16-21.) To behold a young man rising for the first time in his native place as a preacher, and to hear Him announce himself as a God-sent messenger of mercy, would arrest the attention and excite the interest of any audience; but to hear Him appropriate this grand old prophecy to Himself, thus declaring that he was the Divine Man so long expected by a weary race, now come to set up his kingdom on earth; *that* must have struck the people with utter amazement. That scene must have stirred the soul, and fixed itself in the memory of every witness. And we might almost have anticipated the result, as they recovered from their astonishment; for what was there in his origin, family connexion, personal appearance, or man-

ner of life to warrant such a presumptuous declaration? So, with a biting sneer, they asked, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark vi. 3). For Him, the offspring of a mechanic and of a lowly peasant girl, to set Himself up as the Christ of God, could anything be more audacious and absurd? Had not their hearts and lips been fired with envy—"a coal that comes hissing hot from hell"—such a taunt had never been thrown at him. But we thank them for that word, and we rejoice that the Divine Spirit has seen fit to preserve it in the record of His life. Meant for a reproach to Jesus, it clothes Him with the highest honour. Taken in connection with all the revealed incidents in His career, and the many striking features of His character and teaching that are so vividly portrayed in the Gospels, it throws a flood of light on the portion of His life now to be examined. It is pregnant with the most suggestive thought. It exhibits kingly greatness in humble life, and summons us to study the carpenter of Nazareth as the Model Working Man.

From first to last His was a life intimately associated with Poverty. His mother could trace her descent along the royal line to the post-king of Israel. But, in her day, the house of David had lost its prestige. For generations it had been under an eclipse; and Mary, most highly favoured among women, seems to have stood no higher in the social scale than one of the peasant class; and the man to whom she was espoused, before she became the mother of "the Prince of Peace," was quite on an equality with her, being known in the little town where they dwelt as plain "Joseph, the carpenter." Their circumstances were nothing improved when "she brought forth her first-born son in a stable, and laid Him in a manger." And when they brought Him to present Him to the Lord in the Temple they had to avail themselves of the substitute which the Law allowed to be offered by those who were too poor to present a lamb. So, their sacrifice was only "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." In the lowly cottage of that poor but honest


couple He spent the first thirty years of His life amid all the ordinary penury and privations incident to the lot of the peasantry by whom He was surrounded. When He laid aside the tools of trade, and assumed the office of Teacher, He was still poor, having apparently saved nothing from all those years of toil. It may have been impossible for him to have done so at His occupation. He may have had to support His widowed mother for many a day, for Joseph is never mentioned after Jesus was twelve years of age; apparently he had been dead for some time before his foster son emerged from private life, and all tradition represents him as having been an old man at the time of his marriage with Mary. What the young carpenter earned over and above what was necessary to maintain himself, His mother, and the younger members of the family, may have been devoted to charitable and religious purposes. Christ himself is His own best gospel. Therefore we conclude that He who afterwards proclaimed the doctrine, "It is more blessed to give than to receive,"

must all along have practised the principle which He commended to others, according to His ability ; and have known "the luxury of doing good."


During the course of His ministry He was often a homeless wanderer, having only the cold mountain side for His bed, and nothing but the midnight dews and the canopy of heaven for His covering. All through that wondrous ministry He was dependent upon the benevolence of sympathizing friends for His daily bread. He wrought miracles to feed others, but none to appease His own hunger, or to quench His own thirst. "Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, Susanna, and many others," are immortalized in the story of His life as those who "ministered unto Him of their substance." In His deep poverty He needed their help, and in His deeper humility He gladly accepted what they cheerfully gave. All His relatives, personal friends, and associates were likewise poor. "What would the poor do if it were not for the poor?" is a question which found an ex-

pressive answer in His experience. From the depths of His humiliation what living streams have flowed, diffusing Heaven's best blessings to our world!

The waters which the prophet Ezekiel saw in vision issuing from the Temple were *only* ankle-deep to begin with, but they grew in volume and in depth till they became a river that could not be passed over. Apt illustration of the movement which Christ inaugurated in the midst of poverty and obscurity! Striking emblem of the progress of His religion! The enterprise which He started in such unpromising circumstances was unparalleled in its nature and the scope of its aims. That One so great, so wise and pure, and inspired with such a grand, far-reaching purpose, should stoop so low to carry it into effect,—selecting for his bosom-friends and followers a few rude, unlettered Galileans; trusting and teaching them, holding intimate fellowship with them, and with that little band of fishermen as His fellow-labourers, without money, without



culture, and without social influence; with all the power of the great, the rich and the learned, with all the ignorance and error, the religions, superstitions, and sins of the world sternly arrayed against them, starting on a mission that aimed at nothing less than revolutionizing the hearts and lives, the manners and customs, the religions, laws, and philosophies of men and nations,—turning the world upside down, and making all things new,—that is the strangest, yet sublimest scene ever enacted on this earth, infinitely transcending all that orators have ever uttered, or poets have ever sung. Mad enterprise! In the eyes of all worldly-wise men, had it been thus originally and plainly put, no doubt it must have certainly so appeared. As it was, Jewish scribes and doctors, heathen priests and sages, regarded it with contempt, and treated it as the outcome of a wild fanaticism, and the vain effort of imposture to aggrandize itself in the esteem and at the expense of weak and ignorant people. But the annals of the eighteen centuries that have since elapsed de-



monstrate that it was the product of Divine wisdom and benevolence ; proving human wisdom to be folly, and the magnificent attempt to have been anything but in vain.


You gaze with admiration on some deep broad river, famous in history and song ; but you have to remember that it is great because it has grown. It was born a tiny rivulet among the far off, mist-wreathed crags of "the everlasting hills," where the tempests sang its natal hymn. But it was born to grow, to fill a wider sphere. So it rushed from its obscure cradle to illustrate the law of progression ; and, as it flowed along, it gathered into its bosom the mountain torrents that are fed by the rains of summer and the snows of winter ; and it broke out on the right hand and on the left, deepening its channel and widening its banks, till it lines the valleys with beauty and fertility ; and, before it loses itself in the embrace of ocean, bears on its glassy breast a white-winged fleet containing the merchandise of nations. So has it been with the Gospel river. At its com-

mencement Christianity was small and insignificant, as all great movements generally have been. It was born as a little, feeble stream among the solitudes of the Judean hills; but it could not be confined there. It was charged with Divine energy to bless the world; and onward it must roll till it covers the earth, like a rejoicing tide, with the knowledge and the glory of the living God, the Saviour. Outward and onward it struggled and flowed in spite of all opposing powers; and it gathered strength and increased in influence as it held on its way; for it was fed by the inexhaustible fountain of grace beneath the Eternal Throne. In its course it swept away the strongest barriers of ignorance, prejudice, and sin. Before the majesty of its presence Judaism soon hid its diminished head, and the Mosaic economy disappeared. It persevered and prospered, and heathenism melted away before the splendour of its rushing, sunny waves. The oracles were struck dumb by the mighty music of its singing tide. The priests were paralyzed; the temples

were deserted and shut up ; and the worshippers “turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven.” Through blood and fire it flowed on its victorious way, and in three centuries one of its trophies sat on the throne of the world, and pagan Rome was baptised the metropolis of Christendom. Since then its fortunes have been varied in different lands and ages ; but, on the whole, its progress has been great, its conquests marvellous, and its triumphs splendid beyond description. It has caused whole nations to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats. It has proved to them the perennial source of happiness unknown before. It has purified their moral nature, and ennobled their intellectual being. It has suppressed injustice and tyranny, and swept slavery from their midst. It has spread freedom and civilization, commerce and peace. It has reclaimed the wicked ; it has saved the lost ; it has turned the barren land into a fruitful field, and made “the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.” It has thus

gone forth on its beneficent career, from one degree of strength unto another, till now, in this last quarter of the nineteenth century, it encircles the globe with the most blessed, vitalizing influences, making all intelligent and candid minds confess the religion of the poor Carpenter is the grandest fact in the history of our world. At this hour the name most widely influential for good on earth is the name of Jesus; and His Gospel is the only one that can lift the nations from their graves, and give peace and rest, and the nobility of true manhood to weary, sin-debased, poverty-stricken souls. Its past achievements are the pledge of greater still to come; and with eloquent voice they thus address the doubting and despondent,—"Despise not the day of small things,"—while they suggest what a power for good the humblest man may become in whose heart dwells the spirit of grace and truth, of glory and of God.


In an essay on "Self-advancement," Arthur Helps says, "The first desirability is to be born



right, north of the Tweed if possible; but at all events in a moderate sized town somewhere." But, however desirable such a start in life may be, none of us had a voice or hand in determining the circumstances of our birth, or got the chance of selecting the character and social position of our parents. Were it possible to have a choice in this matter the great majority of mortals would certainly elect to be born the heirs of lordly fortunes and of princely patrimonies.

Seneca, the great Roman philosopher, and one of the "Seekers after God," was constantly dwelling on the praises of poverty; but at the same time he was guilty of the delightful inconsistency of hoarding up wealth to such an extent as earned for him from satirist and historian the epithet, *Praedives*, "the over wealthy." He was a mere theorist in respect to the benefits of poverty, and never dreamed of putting his theory into practice. Whatever these benefits may be, they are so counterbalanced by attendant ills that, generally, men


would gladly be excused from forming their acquaintance. The common verdict of humanity is, that poverty is anything but desirable. It is only under a special impulse of religious enthusiasm, or philosophical conviction, or moral persuasion, that men have freely decided to give, in actual fact, a different verdict. Were the choice given to start with, perhaps a few, wise as Agur, wishing to escape the evils involved in both extremes, would prefer the golden mean, and their prayer might be, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." Assuredly no one would deliberately choose a state of penury in which to be born, and in which to pass all the days of his earthly pilgrimage. Only One ever had a choice in respect to the circumstances of His birth, and He freely and deliberately selected a lot in life the very opposite of that which men generally covet. He desired and resolved "to be born right;" and, in full view of all the hardships to which it would subject Him, He preferred to every other the state of poverty in which to be born, and in which to




live and die. Results have proved that, in preferring such a birth, "the first desirability" was attained, for in no other state could He "be born right." There was profound meaning in that lowly birth, and a far-reaching purpose of Infinite Wisdom in cheerfully choosing such an earthly lot. The Mendicant Orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi accepted his theory, that, in voluntarily renouncing all property, and adopting a life of poverty and a ministry of dependence, they followed the example of Christ, and that it was their duty so to imitate Him. This gave rise in the early part of the fourteenth century to a great controversy between the spiritual Franciscans, the great Schoolman, William of Ockham, and the Bull of Pope Nicholas IV. on the one side; and the moderate Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Bull of Pope John XXII. on the other. The latter party prevailed, and with good reason on their side; for, though Christ and His Apostles were poor, they were never in absolute want, and there is no proof that He was ever

an actual mendicant, much less that He wished His followers to become beggars in copying Him. That were to destroy the very foundations of social order and happiness. It is *the spirit* of His life in respect to this matter, and not the letter, which the Apostle commends to our imitation when he says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) That was the spirit of love, of sacrifice, and of giving. Had such been the spirit of that great institution which once extended over Europe, the page of history would not have been stained with the tale of their corruption and extravagance. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

In regard to His social position it might have been fairly expected to be otherwise with him who was to be born King of the Jews. Humanly speaking, everything would seem to have indicated that the Messiah, whose mission it was to restore all things, should be born and edu-




cated among the great, the noble, and the wealthy. It was so anticipated; and at that very epoch when He appeared the whole nation of Israel was on the tiptoe of expectation, and every eye was strained to catch the first glimpse of their coming deliverer whom their imaginations, heated with intense desire, had clothed with all the imperial dignity, authority, and power of an earthly sovereign such as had not yet reigned in Jerusalem. Hence the bitter disappointment with which the mean parentage, the plain appearance, the lowly life, and the spiritual teaching and claims of Jesus filled their hearts. Hence, too, their enmity, opposition, and final rejection of Him. A poor king was to them anomalous and absurd. And for Him to summon them to enter His kingdom, to become His subjects, to honour His person, and to obey His sceptre, was to insult them to their face. So, they declared, "we will not have this man to reign over us," and so strong were their feelings of enmity and chagrin that, while they regarded His kingship as a myth, they



trumped up a charge against Him of attempting to rival Cæsar; the very thing they wished and expected their Messiah to do, that He might free them from the Roman thralldom under which they groaned; and because He would not make such an effort on their behalf, after proving Himself equal to the task by raising Lazarus from the dead, they rested not until they had compassed His death.

A striking contrast to the conduct of the Jews who, as a people, have ever since rejected Jesus, is seen in the readiness with which His Gospel has been accepted by the Gentile nations. How is this to be explained? These nations were not blessed with the light of a Divine Revelation regarding the high matters of God and the soul, of duty and destiny, such as would give a final and satisfactory answer to the momentous questions that must ever stir the depths of the human spirit. So, under the restless impulse of their spiritual wants and aspirations, and the ceaseless outgoings of an inborn, solemn curiosity, they were constrained



to reason and speculate, and to construct for themselves theories of the universe, and systems of philosophy, of morals, and religion. Though it be true that in their brave and earnest attempts to explain the mystery of life, death, and immortality, and to rise above the seen, the shadowy, and perishing, and to grasp the unseen things that are the real, the changeless, and eternal, they "only gathered dust and chaff;" such a training, nevertheless, gave them a knowledge of their own spiritual necessities, and so qualified them to judge between truth and error, and to discern the fitness of the Gospel to satisfy the wants and longings of their souls, as to make them ready to embrace its joyful message. Clemens Alexandrinus, who was well acquainted with Grecian philosophy, maintained that in the order of Providence, it had proved a preparation for the reception of the perfect truth of the Gospel. He called it "a step to something higher," "a preparatory discipline, and ordained to be such by the Providence of God," and "an anterior culture of the soil of

man's heart for receiving the seed of life." Philosophy, too, had prepared a language through which Christianity found easy access to its higher truths into cultured minds. By this wonderful two-fold preparatory process was the way opened for the triumph of the Gospel among the foremost of heathen nations. On the other hand, the Jews had no such philosophical training. They did not need it; because they had "lively oracles" of God to give them a better education; the certainty of truth on the chief questions which the soul of man requires to be solved; and assurance of salvation through the coming Christ. But they failed to improve their high privileges; they misunderstood the Scriptures; and, not having any philosophical culture instead, they were not so capable of estimating the character, aims, and teachings of Him who declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life," of appreciating the adaptation of His Gospel to their mental and their spiritual needs. This, as well as His disappointment of their

dearest and long-cherished hopes in respect to their promised Messiah, may help to account for their original and continued rejection of Him.

But the question arises, *Why did He thus blast their hopes by assuming such a mean condition in life?* He could easily have transcended their loftiest expectations by appearing in regal glory far exceeding that of Solomon. Invested with imperial power and pomp unequalled on earth, He could have raised the fallen throne of Israel, and exalted that down-trodden nation far above all others to be the mistress of the world. But, had He done so, the Divine predictions which described the true Messiah as "a man of sorrows," a sacrificial lamb, and a spiritual king, would have been falsified, and thereby He would have been proved to be something else than the Christ of Scripture, and the Sent of God. Moreover, had He tried to realise their expectations by the assumption of mere temporal sovereignty, He would not only have pandered to their prejudices as an im-

postor would have been sure to do; He would also have increased and intensified that spirit of exclusiveness and self-righteous conceit already so dominant in their hearts, as to make them plume themselves on being the peculiar favourites of Heaven, and to regard all other nations as barbarians and dogs. To have assumed the character and position that would have pleased them would have been to circumscribe His influence, not only in the world, but even among themselves; for then He would have been surrounded chiefly by the learned and influential magnates of the land, and thus comparatively few could have enjoyed the benefit of His incomparable teaching, while the gulf that separated the lower classes from the higher would not only have been kept open, but must have been greatly widened. So, discontent would have been excited, and envy would have burned in the bosoms of the excluded classes toward those who monopolized His presence and favours; and He would have been charged with maintaining class distinctions, ignoring the

middle classes, and treating with contempt the poor. But He came, not to minister to the vanity of rank or caste, or to widen existing breaches between man and man in the land of Israel, but rather to heal them. Indeed He did not come for the exclusive benefit of even that entire nation, but "to be the Saviour of the world." Heathendom, as well, was looking and longing for "the coming Man" who should inaugurate the world's golden age. A Latin poet made that golden age centre in the birth of "a marvellous child." And a Greek one predicted that

"A greater hero far,
Unless great Socrates could err,
Should rise to bless some future day ;
And teach to live, and teach to pray."

So vividly had these old thinkers caught the foregleams of the yet unrisen "Sun of Righteousness" who was surely coming to break up the darkness of the world, and bring healing on His wings. But only a philosopher greater than the divine Plato would have satisfied the

leading minds of Greece ; and only a military hero greater than Cæsar, whom Virgil described as holding a divided empire with Jove, would have been hailed and accepted by the chief men of Rome. He might have appeared as a philosopher, and, by His unequalled wisdom, He could easily have won the homage of the Grecian sages, as He solved the strange and solemn problems, and unravelled the awful mysteries which so sadly perplexed them. But His dissertations could not have been understood and appreciated by the common people ; His influence must have been limited to the learned intellectual few, and through them it might have been slowly communicated to the same class of minds in other nations ; but this would have still more inflated the vanity of the philosophical tribe, and separated them still further from the rest of men. Had He appeared in Rome, clothed with the imperial purple, even though His reign had been as peaceful and productive of wide-spread happiness as the poet foretold that of "the marvellous child" should be, His

personal influence must have been, in great measure, confined to the great men around His throne; and, being exerted for the benefit of His own empire only, it must have stirred against Himself and His realm the enmity of other nations. He knew that pride had made the Roman the iron ruler of the world, and left him still burning with the desire for conquest. He knew that pride had made the Greek first "a reasoning, self-sufficing thing; an intellectual all-in-all;" and finally an enthusiastic wrangler about barren words. He knew that pride had made the Jew, who should have been a fountain of religious life to the world, a stagnant pool of spiritual disease and death. He knew that pride and ambition had been the curse and ruin of our race, the prolific parents of all the unrest and misery that everywhere prevailed, and that rest of heart and joy of soul could only be enjoyed through the cultivation of meekness, humility, and love. Therefore, to teach all men the need and value of these graces, by a living illustration, He chose a poor man's lot, and,

enjoying therein the holiest peace and the sublimest satisfaction, He invited all the restless, heavy-laden sons of men to come and take his yoke upon them, and learn of him; "for," said He, "I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

But not only did He utterly disappoint the expectations of the great, the wise, the ambitious, and the proud by the condition He assumed; the mean circumstances of his birth, the self-renouncing spirit of his entire life, and the shameful character of the death to which He freely submitted, constituted one solemn and eloquent protest against the selfish principles and practices that distinguished the men of the world. They have all along felt him to be a living, practical rebuke to them. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The author of "The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation" pertinently remarks that, "It was


necessary the Messiah should assume that condition in life which could benefit the human family in the greatest degree by his example and instructions; in which He would have the most direct influence in destroying selfishness and pride in the human heart, and fostering in their stead humility, contentment, and benevolence." That state of poverty which He selected was an emphatic condemnation of the treatment to which the poor had hitherto been subjected by the rich and powerful. They had been treated, not as parts of society at all, but as food for the sword, and as the tools and drudges of those whose privilege it was to constitute society. The rich and great were the grindstones in the social mill, and the poor were the grain which it was their business to crush. Against this heartless oppression, Christ's assumption of humanity, and his fellowship with poverty, uttered a striking protest, and an awfully solemn appeal. By thus identifying Himself with the poor, He said to tyrants and oppressors, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto

one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."


By his lowly life of poverty He wished to show his true sympathy with man as man ; for originally, in respect to earthly riches, all men are equal. Each man enters life personally destitute, and entirely dependent upon others for support. He was in body and in soul, from first to last, the true Representative and Brother, not merely of men as individuals, but of man the race ; therefore, He began at the beginning, as humanity begins, entirely dependent. He desired to share in the struggles and privations, in the sufferings and sorrows of human kind during all his earthly life. In no other sphere or character than those which He selected could that desire be gratified. He wished to learn by experience what life in poverty really is, that He might be fully qualified to sympathise with the children of want and toil, and be to them in their hour of trial and time of need their "Brother born for adversity," making his grace sufficient for them ; and in their sea-

sons of despondency and grief, their Brother of consolation, wiping away their tears, and filling their hearts with hope and joy. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." In all our afflictions He was afflicted. He is, therefore, our merciful High Priest; perfectly qualified to intercede for us, because "He was made perfect through suffering."

He came to regenerate society throughout; and, in order to effect this purpose, He wisely began at its foundation. The poor, He knew, were the basis of the social fabric, though they had been regarded and treated as a mere accumulation of rubbish, surrounding it as an earth-work of defence. To make the entire structure sound, which had become so terribly shattered and corrupt, its foundation must be relaid with solid, living stones on which the higher tiers, composed of similar materials, may firmly rest. Let that be done; and gradually there will be reared a glorious building, invulnerable in its strength, and unfading in its beauty, in whose halls the song of happiness shall ever ring, and whose



golden pinnacles and crystal dome shall reflect the splendour of prosperity's unsetting sun. Though they had been deemed the offscourings of humanity, the poor were the life blood of society. Let that be made pure, and there is hope for the race. A reformation which begins at the top of the social scale will naturally work its way downward a certain length; but its influence must be limited. Whereas, a reformation which commences at the bottom must work itself outward and upward till it affects circumference and summit with its renewing powers. Because the Protestant Reformation began with the common people in Scotland it became there universal and complete; but because in England it began with the higher classes, it proved there only a partial success. It has never been completed there; and this partly explains the strong reactionary movement towards Romanism now at work in the English Church. Knowing well the nature of the human mind, and the tendency of moral influence, the force of example, and the power of truth and goodness, the Great Reformer



began and carried on his work among the masses of the people, and shared with them a common lot ; and the change that has since passed over the face of society, and the homage which He has received from the lofty and the lowly, the rich and the poor, proclaim the far-seeing wisdom of his method ; the radical nature of his remedy for the evils of the world ; and the grandeur of his spiritual power over the hearts and lives of men.

He began with the poor, and as one of themselves, because they were more accessible than the rich, the learned, and the noble. If they were animated with pride, it could not be the pride of birth, or caste, of rank, or wealth, or wisdom. No learning, or titles, or estates had they in which to trust or glory. They were, then, all the more likely persons to listen to his teaching ; and to accept his friendly help, as counsellor, guide and Saviour. It marked the dawn of a new era and order of things in their experience, when, for proof of his own Messiahship, He pointed to the fact that, by himself, "to the poor the gospel is preached." To their credit, too, it is recorded that his confi-


dence in them was not misplaced, nor his efforts to enlighten them unappreciated and vain ; for it is affirmed that " the common people heard him gladly." They felt that He was pre-eminently their friend. And yet, though He had chosen for himself a life-lot of poverty, and allied himself all through with the humblest of the people ; cultivating the friendship chiefly of the poor ; devoting himself principally to their instruction in the things of his kingdom ; healing their diseases ; and lavishing on them his tenderest sympathies, they could not but be impressed with the conviction that, nevertheless, He was no mere class leader or partizan. In so doing, He was not actuated by selfish motives. He never sought to set class against class. He never uttered a word fitted to rouse the down-trodden poor to a war of revenge upon the rich. On the contrary, He inculcated the only principles ; He pressed upon them the only motives ; He supplied them with the only influences really adapted to bind all men together in the bonds of a true and common brotherhood, by first drawing

them into reconciliation and union with God as their Father and their Saviour too.

That life of humiliation speaks to the poor even more powerfully than the gracious words that fell from his lips; not merely revealing in unmistakeable ways his rare sympathy, but teaching them the highest practical wisdom. It bids them beware of envying men of wealth and lofty position in the world. It teaches them that riches cannot of themselves make true men; that, instead of ennobling, they often tend to debase the character and ruin the souls of their possessors. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." That Divine humiliation was surely intended to proclaim,—and it does it with the fervour and force of an eloquence which words could never wield—important truths of which the sons of toil and the struggling poor need to be constantly reminded; that genuine happiness may be enjoyed, and the nobility of Christian manhood may be cultivated

in the lowliest spheres, and in the midst of the most trying social disadvantages. It shows that around a life of honest poverty they may throw a robe more beautiful in the eye of Heaven than the coronation robes of earth's proudest king; and may encircle it with a glory outshining the splendour of earth's grandest throne. And what they can, they should. He is anxious that they should give him the opportunity of helping them to do it.

Some men—so called—are ashamed of their humble origin, and either forget or blush to own their poor relatives when they themselves have risen in the world. We have heard of a famous London divine who, after a visit to his parental home, was accompanied to the steam-boat by his father, a working man, who was doubtless proud of his son and of the honour of carrying his travelling bag. But, at the wharf some persons of distinction saluted the clergyman; and he, afraid lest his relation to the poor old man should be discovered, generously handed him a shilling, and so paid



him off as if he had been his hired porter! It was not so with the Master whom he professed to serve. He was not ashamed to be born in poverty, to live and labour, to preach and die a poor man. Never did He blush to own his humble relatives. With his dying breath, in the face of that fierce rabble, and of their rulers, who hounded them on to mock and crucify him, He recognised and owned his poor, grief-stricken mother; and bequeathed her as his only earthly legacy to the care of a poor fisherman, whom He acknowledged as a brother, and whom He asked to be to her as a son in his stead. How the manliness of that humility confounds the pride which boasts of noble blood, and condemns the contemptible vanity which often inspires those who have risen to positions of eminence from the depths of obscurity!

In immortal strains have the poets celebrated the praise of honest poverty. Berangère, the lyric bard of France, exults in the real nobility of his humble ancestors; and, as he contrasts

them with the old *noblesse* who had been their oppressors, he proudly sings,—

“I’m of a breed that’s low indeed ;
Yea, very, very low !”

Alexander Pope uttered the simple but momentous truth, which needed to be greatly proclaimed, in his oft-quoted line,—

“An honest man’s the noblest work of God !”

Robert Nicoll, Scotland’s second Burns, as he sang the sterling worth of his poor grandfather, exclaimed in rapture,—

“I’m noble by descent, —
Thy grave will hold an honest man !”

And his determination to maintain the family honour is thus announced,—

“I’m poor, unheeded, but I’ll be an honest man I said ;
Truth I will worship, and I’ll feel for all whom God hath
made.
The poor, the honest man can stand with an unblanching
brow
Before earth’s mightiest,—such I’ll be : the Whisper
spoke not now.”

And the original Burns of Scotland has taught

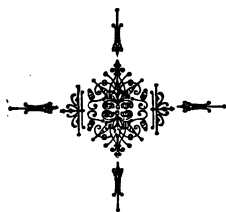
the world, in words that shall go singing the truth through all the ages, that,—

“The honest man, though e'er sae puir,
Is king o' men for a' that !”

These poetic sentiments find a warm and thrilling response in the breast of every manly man. But their poetry, true and beautiful though it be, is lost like the morning star in the radiance of the rising sun, when compared with the breathing poetry of the Saviour's life. That is the grandest of all poems; and only in that life, so full of beauty, of truth and goodness, have these sentiments found a complete embodiment and illustration. The peerage of honest poverty is a great and honourable guild, and first on its long muster-roll is “the name that is above every name.” The King of Men is the Man Christ Jesus; and his life calls on every working man to dignify himself and his order by making his life also a beautiful consecration to truth, to goodness, and to God.

“I am a man—nothing that can affect man is indifferent to me!” exclaimed a great Roman

orator in the theatre, and his sixty thousand auditors rose to their feet to applaud the man and his sublime utterance. But that was philanthropy of the cheapest kind,—“man’s interest in man,” as F. W. Robertson puts it, “expressing itself in a beautiful sentiment—nothing more.” The same audience, too, whose admiration it evoked, would, in all probability, have been quite as excited by the courage and skill displayed in a gladiatorial encounter with the lions. We look for a perfect, living illustration of that sentiment through all lands and ages, and find it not save in the person of Jesus Christ. His interest in man was not expressed in mere sentiments, but in his unique life. His philanthropy clasped the world in its warm embrace. Each man was enshrined in his heart. Words could not tell how dear to Him was every unit of mankind. It needed that life of humiliation, of poverty and obedience, of benevolence and self-sacrifice, to reveal His strong, immortal love to universal man, without distinction and without exception; and that





The King of Men in Industry.



“Labour is sweet, for Thou hast toiled ;
And care is light, for Thou hast cared.”

Faber.



CHAPTER III.

THE KING OF MEN IN INDUSTRY.



WE live in a practical universe :
although Alexander Smith,
author of "A Life Drama,"
&c., has finely said,—


"All things have something more
than barren use !

There is a scent upon the brier :
There is a pleasure in the Autumn
dews :

Cold morns are fringed with fire !"

we know that the tokens of the beautiful and
the sublime are present in countless forms and

variety everywhere. The beauties of Nature lend a charm to her practical operations, but never can eclipse them. "All things are full of labour;" actively engaged in toil co-operant to a common end, so that the beautiful and the useful are wondrously blended into the harmony of a perfect unity. Yet, in many respects, the practical rather than the pictorial, the useful rather than the poetical, would seem to be the chief end for which the universe exists. Certain it is that on none of the Creator's works can this inscription be found,—“More for ornament than use.” The spirit of industry reigns in all the departments of Nature. It pervades the worlds of matter and of mind. It proclaims the law, teaches the design, and upholds the order of the universe. Industry is the diligent application of skill and power in producing useful results. All creatures, rational or irrational; all things, organized and formless, not only owe their existence to the united effort of wisdom and might, and bear upon their front the indubitable evidence of their origin; but



they have been constructed upon the principle of the continuity of labour,—to carry out and on the benevolent ends of that sleepless industry that called them into being, for whose pleasure they were created, and by whose Omnipotence they are still sustained. God is the Great Worker of eternity and immensity. Activity is an essential principle of his nature, and work is the delight of his heart. At some point undefined, but immeasurably farther back in the cycles of the past than creature thought can travel, He began to work; putting his thoughts into deeds, and revealing himself in outward, finite forms. He had been from eternity the Infinite Fountain of life and happiness, of beauty and goodness; and in the fulness of time He put forth his creating fiat, that He might have the opportunity of communicating to other beings something of his own overflowing bliss. He sowed the fields of space with starry worlds, and peopled them with hosts of creatures, endlessly diversified in rank, in organization, in sensitivity of heart and faculty of mind, to

experience his paternal goodness, and "to drink out of the rivers of his own pleasures."

"What are stars but God's thoughts indurate? The
Burning words that rolled forth blazing from his
Mighty lips when He spake to the breathless
Infinite, and shook the wondrous sleeper
From her dreams?"


Our own planet has been the special object of his care and industry. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Over the formless void and the chaotic mass of matter, yet undignified with life, the Spirit of God brooded like a dove, and made it pregnant; and gradually, through unchronicled eras, He built up and furnished the bright green earth as a fit home for the human family, while as yet there was none of them. And when at length Man himself, God's last and fairest work, appeared upon the scene, "with splendid purpose in his eyes," he was appointed his Maker's successor in labour. Having finished all his own works, and pronounced them good, He transferred to the hands of man the girdle of industry with which to encircle the world;

and thus ran the Divine charter and commission —“Replenish the earth and subdue it;” wherein was sufficient authority, affording ample scope for enterprising toil.

Even for our first father Adam, in his sinless state, work was at once a necessity and pleasure, a privilege and an honour. It was needful both for his body and his mind, to develope and strengthen his physical system by vigorous and regular exercise; to send the blood dancing in purity and force through his veins; to keep the flush of health and beauty glowing on his cheek; to give freshness and vitality to his animal spirits; to preserve him from temptation and degeneracy; to increase his happiness; and to augment his knowledge of the works of nature and the ways of God. Since then his offspring have gone forth in manifold ways, carrying out by head and hand, in the ceaseless efforts of mechanical skill and inventive genius, the high purposes of the Almighty for the good of his creatures. To “the Father of Spirits” it must be a joy to see his children busily engag-

ed in the great scheme of labour on which He has ordained so much of human happiness shall constantly depend.

Because such was the law of life for man, both in his innocent and fallen state, a life of industry, of mental and manual labour, had to be lived by "the Second Adam," as well as by the first and all his ordinary descendants. In order to be our true Representative and Mediator, it was necessary that Christ should honour this law, as well as the moral law which He came to magnify and make honourable in our room and stead. No cumberers of the ground are sanctioned in God's vineyard. Fruit-bearing is the practical purpose of life. "He that will not work, neither should he eat." "He that will not provide for himself and his household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He who, by his Spirit, uttered these decrees, in assuming our nature, must undertake to reverence and obey them in his own daily life. We should have inferred as much from what, as man, He undertook to perform, even though



nothing definite had been stated respecting the manner in which He did it. We could not but conclude that with head, or hands, or both, He was all his life long an active and useful worker. But his enemies, in that sneering question of theirs, have told us plainly how He was engaged for many years. It appears that He was a *carpenter*. The Greek word *teknon*, rendered "*carpenter*" in our version of the New Testament, meant first and generally *an artificer*, and then, more specifically, *a worker in wood*, though not exclusively. The probability, therefore, is, that Jesus had to combine several handicrafts; working as a joiner and cartwright, and possibly as blacksmith too. Rev. Dr. Wallace of Glasgow, who visited Nazareth a few years ago, says,—“Often did we hang over the balcony of the convent, and look into a little workshop right before us combining the two occupations of a country smith and carpenter. All kinds of rude, rustic implements were brought to be repaired, and quite a rare medley of country jobbing in wood and iron


was done in that quaint little workshop. It was a sight that had great interest for us: it linked us to the far past, and to the work-a-day life of the world's greatest Man, as we heard the ring of the anvil mingled at times with the rasping of the saw, and witnessed the town's people bringing boxes to be mended, or the *fellaheen* their rough implements of field labour. We thought it was just such a workshop as that in which the Divine Workman—the Lord of life and glory—dignified human toil by labouring with His own hands, thus showing us how every department of life and labour may be pervaded by His own spirit of goodness.”*

Among the Jews every father was bound to do four things for his son: to circumcise him; to redeem him; to instruct him in the law; and to teach him a trade; and this last requirement was based on the wise and just maxim—“He who teaches not his son to do some work, is as if he taught him robbery.” This was a laudable custom.

* The Desert and the Holy Land. Chap. xiii. p. 307.

Well would it be for society if all Gentile fathers in affluent circumstances followed the example. What evils would thereby be prevented ! Their sons would thank them for it in after days. Because such a custom is despised by the aristocracy, and by many far beneath them in rank, immense fortunes are squandered in fearful dissipation ; and multitudes of young men who might have been ornaments to society, and sources of blessing to the world, have become scourges to their families and curses to society ; and, bankrupt in character and estate, have gone down to dishonoured and premature graves. What is sown must be reaped.


Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, was known as "the carpenter;" and, very naturally, he would teach his foster son his own trade. It would be easier for a poor man to do this than to apprentice the youth to a stranger ; and, by his remaining at home, their mutual affection would be cultivated without interruption. They were thus spared the solemn pang of separation which must be felt when the young man leaves the parental



roof, and all the home influences and associations, to fight the battle of life among strangers. But Jesus would have the choice of his trade. We feel sure that an earnest and sincere regard would be paid by his parents to his particular tastes and aptitudes. He, too, would seek to know himself, and what He was fit for; and what was the best thing for him to do in the circumstances in which He was placed. From a child He would be familiar with the sounds, the tools, and the operations of the workshop; and, almost insensibly to himself, He would come to have a liking for the trade of the carpenter. When the hour of decision came it would be an easy matter for him to settle what his occupation should be. He made his choice, and He selected a useful, manly, and honourable trade; one that would not only secure a livelihood for himself, but which would be a real blessing to others, and which would leave monuments behind the workman to testify to his skill and industry. No parent should devote his sons to callings for which they have no taste or adapta-

tion. Parents should most religiously beware of sending their boys to any employment that tends to blast rather than to bless the world. And young men should learn from the example of Jesus to select for themselves trades and professions such as are fitted to make them manly, useful men, by whose labours the civilization and happiness of the world shall be really promoted. Only thus can they serve their generation according to the will of God.


There is every reason to believe that He was a diligent worker, both as apprentice and journeyman. Eagerly would He listen to the instructions of Joseph; and earnestly would He watch the various processes going on around him in the workshop, that He might quit himself with credit in the tasks committed to his hands. The Young Carpenter receiving and beginning to practise the first lessons of his trade, would be no mean subject for the genius of the painter. That youth, depend upon it, was no mere eye-servant. He must have cherished a genuine interest in his work. He who after-



wards declared, "I am come not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," must have felt that there was a real dignity in his labour; that, in serving man faithfully, He was, at the same time, truly serving God. In the daily exercise of his craft He was about his Father's business; that humble work being, meanwhile, best adapted to promote his Father's glory, and the service which was best fitted to prepare himself for future and higher usefulness. Not only would He improve his time in perfecting himself in the mysteries of his trade; but the product of his toil would show that He had given an honest day's work for his wages. We cannot conceive of him, in whose soul justice and love were the reigning principles, idling away his time, or playing the part of the mere hireling, who longs for the shades of evening, the hour of release, and the coveted but undeserved pay. The golden rule which He prescribed for others was lovingly translated into his own work-day life.

We need not question whether his was model

workmanship. It would be best in quality, as well as honest in quantity. We cannot suspect him of being an untasteful, clumsy, or superficial workman. It was not after such a fashion that He made the worlds and their inhabitants. They do honour to their Maker; and so must his carpentry have done. It could not be merely fair and tasteful in appearance, but in reality a sham. He hated and condemned hypocrisy; and poured out his virtuous indignation on those "whited sepulchres," who cleansed the outside of the cup and platter, and left the inside full of all uncleanness. He believed in reality, and not in semblance. He was his own religion, alive and active, earnest and consistent: the incarnation of all the virtues which He commended to others. He put his religion into his work; and, therefore, we conclude that his work would be tasteful, substantial, and enduring. His work would be worship indeed—for it was the practical proof of his devotion to the will of his Father and the good of his fellowmen. John Ruskin has nobly said:



“If I were a mason, building a wall, I should feel that I had a manhood as well as a masonry, and would strive to put on my best work; so that when I passed the wall in future I would take pleasure in the reflection that there I put my conscience as well as my bricks; my noblest efforts of intellect as well as my handicraft.” And Macaulay has declared that “the most brilliant writer on morals does not deserve half the gratitude from mankind which is due to the maker of a substantial pair of shoes.” The reason evidently consists in the fact that the one is but a theoretical moralist, whereas the other is a practical. And so, tradesmen may bind the phylacteries of religion round their brows, and pin their profession of Christianity to the sleeves of their coats; but it is mere pretence, parade, and clap-trap, unless they put their conscience and creed into their work. That is the kind of religious display which the world requires to convince it that Christianity is Divine. This grand lesson applies equally to merchants and employers as to the toiling operatives.

"Here, help me to stretch this cloth!" said an employer to his apprentice as he was preparing his goods for the market. "I can't do it," was the boy's reply. "Why so?" "My conscience won't allow me, sir." "Then, you are not fit to be a linen draper!" was the master's response. No; he was not fit, on such sinful terms as these. But the boy who had the heroism to maintain, in such circumstances, his Christian principles, was fit to become a scholar, a minister, and author, of whom the Church of Christ has had cause to be proud, under the name of Dr. Adam Clarke. Only the spirit and the principles of the Carpenter of Nazareth can hallow and consecrate all the departments of the labour market, purge the workshops of selfishness and deceit, purify the counting houses from avarice and injustice, and the warehouses from adulteration and falsehood.


Jesus would be economical in the use of the materials of his trade. In after days, when He had fed a starving multitude with bread miraculously provided, He said to his disciples,—

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost;" so teaching them and us that bread is precious, and that we should be careful without being niggardly, and be generous without being wasteful. In nature He has ever been revealing himself as the Great Economist. In all the tear and wear of the vast machinery of the material universe no solitary atom is ever lost. It may change its form, but it does so only to be applied by him to another purpose. It changes, but it cannot perish. How unlike to his works are those of men! What waste and wear distinguish human-made machinery! Still, all the arts and sciences are nobly striving to imitate the Creator in husbanding materials, and turning waste matter to a profitable account. When He toiled at the joiner's bench He carried out the same principles of economy in the faithful use of all materials entrusted to his care; and thus He set a standing example to all workmen to be as careful of their employer's property as if it were their own. They ought in all such matters to square their actions by the golden

rule. Let both servants and masters listen to the weighty words of Him who is their pattern in all things,—“He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” The trueness of his life in the workshop at Nazareth had beautifully expressed these sentiments long before they were uttered by him in words.


We cannot imagine him to have been a mere mechanical workman. He would make himself well acquainted with the *why* and the *wherefore* of the things pertaining to his trade. He would seek to understand its scientific principles, as well as to become an adept in its mechanical art; and in the different branches these principles would be wisely turned to the best practical advantage. How often is it quite otherwise with workmen! Tradesmen should be something nobler than human automatons. Mechanics should be something higher

than animated machines. The works of the factory, the forge, the bench, or the farm, rightly performed, will produce not mere artizans, labourers, and farmers, but *men*—true, intelligent men—who, through observation and study, gain pleasure, culture, and profit from their toils; and who, in pursuing their calling, grow rich in the knowledge of natural science, which they increasingly turn to the good of others. So full of wisdom as his after history shows him to have been, while He was the working man He must have practised the maxim, “What is worth doing, is worth doing well.” And we can easily conceive how highly his work would afterwards be prized by those who loved him; not merely for its own excellence, but because of the rare excellence of the workman. After all his glory had been manifested,—the glory of his teaching and miracles; the glory of his death, his resurrection, and ascension,—his friends and followers may well be excused, if they treasured with peculiar care and admiration some curious piece




of work, or pointed with pride to the tools of husbandry, or the joinery of their cottages which his hands had made.

He would, too, be a cheerful workman. While there was around him a world of sin and suffering and woe, fitted to sadden his heart, He had in himself, in his Father, and in his work, everything to make him glad. And, just as the sun, because he is bright himself, cannot but illumine all beings and all things within the range of his influence, so the Young Carpenter, full of cheerfulness, because free from sin, and satisfied that He was in his right place, and doing his Father's will, by his blessed presence and cheerful spirit, must have shed a gladdening sunshine on all around him alike in the workshop, and in the social circle. As He mingled with men He would have his own share of trouble, annoyance, and misrepresentation. He was too far above them to be understood and appreciated, and his very superiority would often awaken against him petty displays of their enmity and opposition. But,



in spite of all such trials, in patience He would possess his soul. His deep peace could not be ruffled by their unhallowed breath ; and their darkest scowl could not chase the pleasant sunshine from his face, or bring down his noble brow with fearful frowns to wither them in return. When secular employments are followed as an act of obedience to God, and not merely to men ; when the workers go forth in the morning to their labours under the conviction that they obey the Divine call, and through the day realise his presence as their helper, guardian, and guide ; when they imbibe and live out his spirit, they will make the hardest toil religious. In the most trying circumstances they will preserve a Christian cheerfulness. They will sing at their work, and shed a bright and quickening influence on their fellows ; and they will return at night to enjoy the rest of the home circle, to be solaced with affection, to enliven with their presence, and inspire with their smiles, the hearts of all waiting to welcome them there.


Jesus became a Working Man to show the province and prerogative of Mind. From Mind all matter had its origin; and thereon it continually depends. From the womb of nothingness it was summoned into being, and moulded into innumerable forms, minute and immense, beautiful and sublime, by the might of the Infinite Will. Man has been made in the image of God that he may assert in many ways the supremacy of his mind over material things; and, from the knowledge of himself as a causative power superior to nature, might understand something of the necessity, character, and workings of the Great First Cause. This was the meaning of the original law of industry issued to him in Eden,—“Replenish the earth and subdue it.” That command required him to rise to a true sense of the nobility of his soulhood; and by the force of his intellect, and the skill of his brain, as well as by the energy of his hands, to make the powers of nature and the forms of matter subservient to his will, and minister to his happiness. To that law the



Divine Man rendered a hearty obedience as He wrought at the carpenter's bench. It was necessary that the second Federal Head of humanity should strive by labour to do what had been imposed on the first. It was right that the Greatest Mind of our race should, in that humble workshop, subject material things to his will as an example to us all. The sovereignty of mind is apparent in all true work. That which bears not the marks of mind, of skill, care, and patience, of heart and conscience, deserves not the name of real work. The mind of man has been ruling over matter in the fields of industry, more or less, through all lands and ages, and never have its achievements been so many and marvellous as in recent times and in Christian nations. It has scaled the heavens, weighed the planets, and mapped their pathways where they wander in orderly confusion. It has analysed the rays of light; and resolved the compounds of nature into their simple and primary elements. It has gone down into the depths of the earth, and

read in the rocks the story of creation through unnumbered millenniums. It has bridged the trackless ocean with its giant argosies; and made the billows serve as beasts of burden, carrying the commerce of the world. By steam and electricity it has contracted space and mastered time. It "setteth an end to darkness; and searcheth out all perfection; overturneth the mountains by the roots; cutteth out rivers among the rocks; seeth every precious thing; bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid it bringeth forth to light." Its triumphs are seen in the treasures of art and industry that are gathered from the ends of the earth into the great international exhibitions; and by such trophies as these we learn something of the grandeur of the human mind, and its unlimited range of growth and capability to work; and that, by its magnificent and persistent efforts, ours has been made the climax and the glory of the ages.

But all this may be done, and, without doubt, much of it has been accomplished, without any



regard having been paid to the claims and example of Christ. Nevertheless, it would be hard to say how much more and better of real work might be performed were his example kept in view, his spirit cherished, and his principles practised by men in their various employments and spheres of industry. But it does not follow that the great triumphs of mind in all the arts and sciences, and homely trades, have no relation to Christ, though they have been effected without any recognition of him. Men may never think of him, or acknowledge their obligations to him: yet it remains a fact that it is because of him that labour has made such vast strides, and won such splendid victories. The mental faculties by which these monuments of industry have been devised and executed, as well as the hands by which they have been reared, are his gifts. He kindles the fires of genius. He supplies all the good impulses and influences necessary to excite invention, and lead to discovery and construction. Though men have been ignorant

of it, He has brought to bear upon them all the lofty and generous motives which have impelled them to undertake such works as have been for the advancement of civilization. Though unseen and unfelt, He has supported and superintended them in their efforts, and crowned them with success. The very obstacles in their way He has used as instruments to secure a grander conquest; as the means of promoting a higher personal culture, and of demonstrating more signally still the royal supremacy of mind. He is really the Great Patron of all the arts and sciences that seek the good of man; and his Religion is their true foster mother. They are all dependent upon him; and they are all but feeble imitators of him, seeking to carry out in their own small way the same plans and principles which He has been developing in all the works of nature. By the princes of intellect much has been discovered in the wide fields of natural science; and much has been done in applying to useful ends, by skilful toil, what has been learned

there. But what immense regions are still unexplored ! And what grand results remain to be accomplished !

“ Men, my brothers ; men the workers, always working something new !


That which they have done, but earnest of the thing they yet shall do !”

Through science and labour, as true yoke-fellows, engaged in one glorious mission, the civilization of our day may be made to appear a century hence almost as mean as that of the middle ages looks to us. The author of “The Theory of Human Progression” maintains that each of the sciences is destined to have its millennium ; that nearly all of them have already reached that state of perfection ; and that, Religion, the best of all the sciences, is to realize its blessed consummation last. Then,

“ Arrayed in truth and purity,


Man the great steps of Time shall tread :
And the world where he labours, like Eden shall bloom ;
And the flowers, like his loves, breathe an endless perfume ;
And his art the wild forest transform as of old,
Till each bough has its clusters of ruby and gold ;
And the streams from his virtue flow magical sweet ;
And the herbage grow green at the touch of his feet ;
And the air, where the tigers of pestilence hide,
Grow sweet as the breath of his innocent bride.”

We know that already by his industry man has transformed the wilderness into a fruitful field, and changed even the natural climate wherever he has cultivated the soil. On the sterile sands through which he has cut the Suez Canal, where vegetation was before unknown, he has made a fresh water lake, and planted trees on its banks, which have brought down the rain, and made verdure spring up; and a town of 5000 people has been built. In such effects as these we get some faint glimmerings of what he yet may do when he works more fully in harmony with God and the laws of nature. We can, at least, in the labours of Jesus, as He toils at his joinery, see a prophecy and pledge of the greater works which He will yet perform when He shall subdue and rearrange all the forces of nature, which now war against man, so that they shall bring him nought but blessing: when He shall deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption; and restore to earth the faded beauty of our long-lost Eden.




He became a Working Man, to teach all men a lesson of self-reliance. By labour He sought to maintain himself in manly independence. Dependence upon others for support while men are able to keep themselves by the efforts of their brain, or the toil of their hands, or both combined, He has thus most strikingly condemned as unmanly and mean, and a flagrant violation of the Divine will as that is revealed in the constitution of our being, the order of nature, and the volume of the Book. All our mental and bodily powers are God's talents, lent us for a season to be employed in useful ways to promote his glory and the good of our fellow-creatures, as well as our own personal interests. Each man is bound to contribute his share to the general welfare of society, instead of making himself a burden to be borne by others; and for the manner in which his talents are used the great Taskmaster will call him to account. He best serves the welfare of the community who relies upon his own industry for a living, and who spurns in the spirit of

true manliness, while health and strength and opportunity are his, the disposition of the mendicant who is too proud to work, but is not ashamed to beg. The life and the teachings of Jesus reveal his deep sympathy with the helpless, honest poor; and they urge us to sympathize with all such, and strive to alleviate their want and woe. But for the sturdy idler and the healthy impostor sympathy there is none; nothing but righteous indignation. Those who by vice and profligacy have disabled themselves for work, and made themselves burdens, instead of helps to society, may be treated as objects of compassion by the virtuous and industrious; but their claims on the public are assuredly inferior to those of the unfortunate but honest poor who have lost the power of supporting themselves. When the tradesman and labourer have used up their strength, and disabled themselves in the effort to be independent, and to contribute to the general prosperity of society, they have a right to be nursed in their decay. They are entitled to the gratitude of



the public for their past services, and to the generous support of the State, for whose welfare they have faithfully toiled. Our poor laws have yet to do something like justice to the working men who are laid aside by trouble and disaster, or who are worn out by age in providing the necessities, luxuries, and splendours of society, and in augmenting the wealth and glory of the nation. Perhaps, ere it is possible to do such worthy servants of the public justice, we must pass through some sort of revolution by which the relations and claims of land and labour shall be re-adjusted on a righteous and Christian basis. As it is, political economy has no heart, and but little conscience. It needs to be inspired with the spirit of the good Samaritan, and to be actuated by the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, to make it a Christian science. Till then, let working men, in the spirit of the Carpenter, exercise a heroic self-reliance; and make the most of their opportunities to secure and maintain an honourable independence. All true labour is Divine in its




origin; and is Divinely blessed in its results. No better proof could Jesus give of the high estimate He placed upon a life of self-reliant industry than by becoming himself a working man.

By that life of toil He came to teach all classes, and especially the wealthy, their entire dependence on labour. The American historian, Bancroft, well says: "It is difficult for pride to put its ear to the ground, and listen to the teachings of a lowly humanity." But the rich and the proud must be taught to remember, that by the horny hands of the poor have their gorgeous palaces been reared and furnished, and their gardens planted and made glorious with a world of greenery and a wealth of flowers. By the same hands has their splendid apparel been woven, shaped, and sewed; and their tables made to groan with the richest provisions of land and sea. Even "the king is served by the produce of the field" which these hands have tilled. Without their industry desolation would soon sweep the most fertile plains, and society would

speedily be dissolved. They create the wealth of men and the wealth of nations. Like the good genius, they turn all things which they touch into gold. By becoming an industrious artizan Jesus has for ever sanctified all truly productive work, while sharing with the poor the primeval curse of labour. As our representative, it was necessary that He should pass through the hardships of the sons of toil ; but the curse has been, in great measure, destroyed by the simple fact that He was a working man. A halo of glory is thereby thrown around a life of industry. By the dignity of his person, by his voluntary humiliation, by the sublime motive that animated him, and by the character that distinguished him as the Son of Man, He has invested the lot of all useful workers with more than imperial honour. It holds true of all who labour as He did,—“ Who sweeps a floor, as for God’s laws, makes that and the action fine.” Then, because it is so, “ Let not the rich man glory in his riches ;” nor let him forget, or treat with contempt, the men on

whom he depends for all he enjoys of worldly wealth and comfort. They deserve from him the deepest gratitude and the highest respect ; not only because he is so dependent upon them, but because they are the highly honoured brothers of the Divine Working Man. Would that all of them would learn to respect themselves as such a relationship demands.


History records to his everlasting praise, the sagacity, humility, and heroism of Peter the Great, who laid aside the glories of his throne and the pleasures of his court, that he might work as a ship carpenter in the dockyard of a Dutch seaport. He saw that national greatness depended upon maritime power ; and that, without vessels of commerce and ships of war, his country could never attain the position among the nations to which she was entitled on account of her vast territories and natural resources. To raise her to such a position he took delight in wielding the tools of the carpenter instead of the sceptre ; and was proud to wear the grimy badge of toil instead of the kingly robe and crown. He



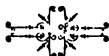
learned the trade, that he might on his return teach his subjects how to build their own ships, and thus become a great naval power. They called the capital of the country by his name ; and there they reared a massive monument, to express their gratitude, and to perpetuate his memory. But his best monument is the Russian empire itself, whose foundations were laid by his humiliation and self-sacrifice in becoming a working man.

But in that humble workshop at Nazareth there is a scene of moral sublimity enacted which makes the deed of Peter the Great "have no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth." In becoming a common artizan behold the infinite humiliation of Jesus Christ ! He who "thought it no robbery to be equal with God " has taken upon himself the form of a servant ! The King and Architect of the universe has emptied himself of his glory that He may become a builder of cottages and the maker of rural implements ! He who set his compass on the face of the deep, and marked out the ocean's bed, and

the bounds of the everlasting hills, and the orbits of the suns and systems which He was about to launch upon their airy way, now stretches line and compass over the rough timber out of which He means to frame such common things as these! And as He bends over bench and anvil, plying plane, and hammer, and saw, see how his brow streams with sweat, and his face is stained with the dust of labour! By that unparalleled deed of humiliation and self-sacrifice He is there laying the foundation of an empire that is to "stretch from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and his dominion endureth throughout all generations." By that act He has won for himself "a name that is above every name." All Heaven rings with his praise. He has had many monuments to commemorate his sublime deed. All the nations of the world, with all that is in them of the true, the beautiful, and the good, are his memorials; and especially is Christendom a standing tribute to his glory. All the souls



that have been renewed, and translated to Heaven, are living monuments to shew forth his praise; and the time hastens when the jubilant shout shall proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ." "The new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" shall be the eternal monument of him, who, though He was King of glory, became a servant; and, though He was Creator of the universe, became a working man, that He might make us kings and priests unto God! What a debt of gratitude we owe to him! What a Friend He is, to stoop so low to raise us to such a destiny!





The

King of Men in Mental Improvement.



“ Go thou in life’s fair morning,
Go in the bloom of youth,
And seek for thine adorning
The precious pearl of truth.
Secure the heavenly treasure,
And bind it to thy heart,
And let no earthly sorrow
E’er cause it to depart.
Go, seek thy Great Creator ;
Learn early to be wise ;
Go, place upon the altar
A morning sacrifice.”

S. C. M.



CHAPTER IV.

THE KING OF MEN IN MENTAL IMPROVEMENT.




BECAUSE of his complex nature, man, the child of the past, struggling through the present, pressing onward to the future, is already the denizen of two worlds. Each of these worlds has constant claims on his attention. Each has claims peculiar to itself. "Mind your meat and your drink!" is the cry of the material world to the sensuous nature of man. "Come away from that life of the flesh, and live the higher life of the soul!" is the earnest appeal that comes to

him from the spirit world. Is there, then, antagonism between these two worlds, or between the different sections of man's compound being? Not necessarily. Can he not attend to both, and yet stand true in his relations to each? Assuredly he may. It is his duty that he should. His danger, and his sin, lie in forgetting their relative importance; especially in under-rating the value of his soul and the prime claims which it has on his care, that it may be satisfied with things suited to its nature and its needs. The temptation to live only for the things of sense and time assails men in all ranks and conditions of life; and it besets with very special and seductive force those who must earn their bread in the sweat of their brows. They need to be reminded that, while manual labour is invested with real dignity, it has a tendency to draw around the worker peculiar influences that are fitted to make him live beneath the dignity of his manhood. The real dignity of labour, if it does not consist in, is certainly best promoted and commended by, its association with a wide and varied informa-

tion, correct thought, and a liberal and progressive culture of the workman's mental nature.

Listen to the eloquent words of Carlyle, who has been a literary worker on a colossal scale for half a century—"Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toilworn craftsman, that with earth-made implement conquers the earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand, crooked, coarse ; wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this Planet. Venerable, too, is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence ; for it is the face of a man living manlike. A second man I honour, and still more highly : him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable ; not daily bread, but the Bread of Life ; endeavouring towards inward harmony ; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low ; highest of all when his outward and inward endeavour are one. Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united ; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest




of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimier in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendour of Heaven springing forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness."



Well, though the copies of such a saintly character be too few, let us rejoice that the Original Type remains as our inspiration and example. The common habit of men seems to be that of sacrificing the soul and its eternal weal in the effort to secure, as the chief good, the enjoyment which things earthly and sensual can supply. We go "back," in thought, "to Nazareth;" and are gladdened by the vivid contrast which the life of the Carpenter reveals; and are thrilled by the striking protest which it rings through the ages against the irrational materialism into which men so generally plunge, and in which they delight to be unreservedly absorbed.

His was a rare intellectual life. In his me-

moirs we have, to a small extent, a revelation of his human intelligence as well as of his Divine wisdom. There we learn that He must have been very thoughtful and intelligent at the age of twelve, for He astonished all who heard him by the profound and far-reaching questions which He put to the Doctors in the Temple, and by the understanding which He displayed in his answers to their questions. Another illustration of the fact comes out in his reply to his mother's reproof for tarrying behind the homeward-bound company that He might discuss important subjects with the Doctors: "Wist ye not," said he, "that I should be about my Father's business?" So soon was his mind filled and fired with thoughts and themes that transcend the experience of common intellects. We are informed, still further, that He afterwards, in the home at Nazareth, "grew in wisdom." That is quite a human characteristic. But that species of growth depends upon personal effort, earnest and persistent. There was need of private endeavour in his case, and of devoted self-exercise, in




order to secure mental improvement; for it appears that He never enjoyed any regular school training, but what must have been of the most elementary kind. It is nevertheless recorded that, in after years, the people were amazed at the proofs of his superior intelligence and wisdom; and they asked, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" It is clear, therefore, that He never attended the schools of the Rabbis where the higher education of the Jews was given and received. One of the reasons for this, doubtless, was the deep poverty of his parents. They could not afford to send him there. But when we remember the character of these Rabbis, and their teaching, a still stronger reason for his absence becomes apparent. It was these men, whom He afterwards charged with being "blind guides," who dealt in barren subtleties and trifling absurdities, while they "omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith." These were the men whom He so sternly condemned for being taken away the key of knowledge;



entering not in themselves, and hindering those that would ; and whom He denounced for "making the word of God of none effect through their traditions." How, then, could He sanction by his presence the hollowness of such schools, and the pride, presumption, incapacity, and hypocrisy of such teachers? They missed a high honour in not having him for a pupil. The old Scotch schoolmaster who had the early training of Robert Pollok, author of "The Course of Time," long after the poet's death, used to say proudly, when any one happened to refer to him, "I taught the boy!" These Rabbis might have been the teachers of him who afterwards spake as never man spake; and might have been proud to say, "We taught the boy!" But his absence from their schools proclaims his hatred of the unrealities reigning there; and shows these teachers to have been, in his esteem, utterly unworthy, intellectually and morally, to be trusted with the training of the young.

We infer, then, that He was taught at home




in his early years by his humble parents, as fully as they could, the elements of Jewish learning; and it must have been to them the highest pleasure to teach such an apt and gentle scholar, who "grew" not only "in wisdom," but "in favour with God and man." Profound thoughtfulness, keenness of perception, accuracy of judgment, and unfailing sagacity, were leading features in his character all along his public career as a man and a teacher. But all these elements are gradually developed in the workings of the human mind. So, in his case, all that was truly human must have been carefully cultivated. When, as the Great Teacher, He afterwards said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" and urged men not to labour exclusively or chiefly "for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," we conclude that one so wise and spiritually-minded, must have acted out the principles which He inculcated, and would surely illustrate while He was the working man, the spirit which He so earnestly commended to

THE KING OF MEN.

others. He could not be altogether absorbed in his trade. Had He been so, He could not have been the Model Working Man. Alas, how very little there is in trade and its concerns to gratify the yearnings of man's higher nature ! Yet multitudes of tradesmen have no higher themes to discuss, in the workshop or out of it, than the petty affairs of daily toil. We cannot conceive the mind of Jesus as not rising beyond the designs, the tools, and the products of his trade ; or the skill and success of himself and his fellow-workmen ; or the question of their wages ; or that of supply and demand in the labour market. These things would have their own place in his thoughts, and would receive their due share of discussion ; for He could not, as a true man, refuse to be interested in all things relating to human welfare in proportion to their value. But He must have made them subordinate to nobler things and themes. The material and mechanical things of his occupation could not entirely engross the love of his heart, nor secure for themselves the chief aim of his life.


This mental self-culture is a duty which each man owes to himself. There is latent in every soul a wondrous power that ought to be unfolded and nursed into maturity. This power not only requires but demands his attention,—not only solicits the kindly aid of all the means necessary to its proper education, but plainly intimates that he himself must be the chief and active agent in the work. The universe exists in order to excite his thoughts; and there is not an object in nature, not an incident in history, not a verdict of the conscience, not an intuition of the mind or yearning of the soul, not an appeal, command, or promise of religion, but courts and deserves his earnest study and respect. Much of his present happiness depends upon the measure of thought which he gives to the things that pertain to life, health, and business; and he is untrue to his own nature if he fails to do his best to secure, in the proper way, such a degree of enjoyment as all his faculties and capacities demand. But, as the soul is more precious than the body, so are the pleasures



of the mind more important than those of the senses. It therefore follows that the duty of regularly furnishing the soul with the elements of thought, the food of its higher life, is more incumbent than ministering to the cravings of the animal appetites. To be content, then, with ignorance, and a low measure of intellectual and moral culture, is unmanly and mean ; and to be satisfied with present attainments is to be guilty of high treason against the majesty of our soulhood. " Reaching forth unto those things which are before," like the heroic Paul, ought to be the aim and effort of every man. Only thus can he fulfil the purpose of his being ; increase the sources of true pleasure, receive fresh impulses to still higher progress, and add new dignity to his mental nature.

" Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused."

This is a duty which we owe to Society. The existence and well-being of society depend upon



each member doing his best to promote the common good. We cannot be isolated if we would. We cannot altogether live unto ourselves. We exert an influence on all with whom we come into contact. They transmit that influence to their neighbours, who, in their turn, again communicate it to others; and thus, outward and onward it continues to spread and to reproduce itself in ever-widening circles. We know it cannot die in time. Its final issues must be among the irreversible facts of another state of being. We are thus constantly touching chords that shall vibrate through eternity. How necessary, then, is it that our acts should flow from loving hearts, clear heads, and healthy wills! Every true thinker is a true worker; and every such man is a blessing to the race. Each triumph of the individual mind promotes the improvement of human character, and accelerates the civilization of the world. Were the devotion of one mind to self-culture only to result in making a more diligent and effective workman, whose labours produce a thoroughly


substantial article, that man has a high claim on the respect of his fellows; and yet he has done nothing more than his duty.

But this is a duty that each man owes to the Author of his being. These mental powers are God's gifts. And what has He not done to provide the best means for their culture? What has He not done to make himself and his will known to man? All Nature is a revelation of the Supreme. Every object in creation is covered with hints and inscriptions that speak to the intelligent observer. But they are there to be questioned and examined. While we are unable to "find out the Almighty unto perfection," little can be learned without diligent search of his works and ways in nature. Even in the fuller and clearer revelation which He has given of himself in the Sacred Book, it is necessary to search as for hidden treasure. Light is there reflected from the throne, the mind, and the heart of the Eternal; but it only enters and irradiates the soul of the man who acts the part of an earnest truth-seeker, and of a patient,

persevering student. In all these fields we are called to work. To one the Master gives five talents, to another two, and to a third one: but all are alike required to turn what has been given to the best account, that so they may be returned to him in the day of reckoning; not as they were given, but improved and increased. Only to such a trusty steward will He say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."


This culture is most important because of its direct tendency to prepare the mind for a future state of being. Were this life all—were we doomed to annihilation when our earthly course is finished, there might be some show of wisdom in adopting the motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But all the instincts of our higher nature—the intuitions of the mind, the yearnings of the heart, and the premonitions of conscience, rise in revolt against the unnatural idea. They emphatically protest

against the libel; and that protest is but an echo of the Divine words,—“The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” We are something nobler than a helpless shallop in the rapids of Niagara, or a withered leaf in the desolating simoon, borne onward to our destiny by the power of inexorable law. We are something grander than foam-flakes tossed on the waves of fate, to be dashed on the rocks of time, and swallowed in the gulf of eternity. We have a Diviner nature, and a more enduring mission than the meteor, which for a moment illumines a passing cloud, and disappears for ever. Our life is something sublimer than a flickering taper, which throws out the beauteous rays of thought for a few brief years, and is then snuffed out by the hand of grim and grizzly death. We are the offspring of God. We are born for immortality; and the character of the soul when it leaps the gulf that now separates it from the termless life, is its character for ever. This earthly life is but a term of trial for a higher stage and style of being,—



a preparation scene, to be used as a stairway leading to holier destinies beyond. But the destiny of the blessed in the great hereafter must be one of gradations; or, as the old divines put it,—“There are different sizes of vessels in glory, but all are full according to their capacity.” So, a Luther, a Newton, a Chalmers, and a Paul, must be able to understand and appreciate, on account of the mental culture secured on earth, the grandeur of the unseen realities to an extent impossible to those who have never risen beyond the alphabet of intellectual and moral training. If it be true, then, that, “On earth there is nothing great but man, and in man there is nothing great but mind,” it is manifest that the greatness of mind here will consist in doing its best to prepare itself for rising in the graduated scale of God’s nobility hereafter.

We may assuredly infer that He who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, and who says “it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness,” not only felt the culture of his mind to be such a




threefold duty incumbent upon him ; but that, under the influence of such motives as those at which we have been glancing, He earnestly discharged the duty, and thus honoured the law of life on which the duty was based. We read that "He was made perfect through suffering." If, therefore, the sufferings through which He passed were the means of perfecting his spiritual manhood, and of qualifying him for his mediatorial work, self-culture must have entered largely into the perfecting both of his intellectual and moral nature, and so given him the requisite preparation for future labour, and for higher honour on earth and in heaven. And, if He who knew no sin needed such a training, much more do we. In obeying the law of life in this respect, "He has left us an example that we should follow in his steps."

While quietly pursuing his self-directed studies, as he viewed the ignorance and error, the sin and misery, that surrounded him, and contemplated "Man's inhumanity to man," his youthful spirit might well be fired with enthu-

siastic desire to rush to the help of his benighted and oppressed brothers, and to redress at once the crying evils under which society groaned. But maturer reflection would call patience into play, and remind him that, not now, but afterwards, when due preparation had been made, He should enter upon his high vocation as the Messiah promised to the fathers—the teacher, friend, physician, and redeemer of our race. The prolonged training through which He so patiently and perseveringly passed in the obscurity of Nazareth, teaches young men the need of acquiring a similar experience for future usefulness, and of restraining their native eagerness to fill important offices, until thorough fitness is attained ; otherwise failure and disgrace must follow the premature assumption of such responsible positions.

The means which He employed to secure this culture were varied, and easily commanded. While at work in the carpenter's shop, his mind might be engaged with the most exalted subjects of contemplation ; for mechanical labour


is not unfavourable to mental abstraction, and the study of things unseen and eternal. While the hands are busy, the mind can range through infinity, speculating on the loftiest themes, painting the grandest scenes, rearing the sublimest structures, and creating for itself a new and glorious universe. The buildings at which He wrought were fitted to suggest striking contrasts in respect to his former work of making the worlds; and the still greater work that lay before him of re-constructing fallen and ruined humanity into the Church of the living God, making it the temple of the Holy Ghost; and of that stupendous enterprise which He had undertaken of restoring our long-lost Paradise, and making all things new. As represented in Holman Hunt's painting, He would often see before him the gloomy figure of the Cross, and realize how the end He had set before him was to be accomplished; that the way to the glory that should follow upon his sufferings and death, should be by sacrifice on the accursed tree for the world's sins. Ah, He bore



that Cross long before it bore him as the Lamb of God.


His leisure hours would be devoted to the same purpose. The physical labours of the day would, to a certain extent, be favourable to evening study; for then the mind would come with fresh force and nimbleness, and, therefore, with renewed pleasure, to the contemplation and examination of its appointed tasks; and the subjects that had engrossed it during the day would be handled with greater ease and effect. In this respect the intelligent and thoughtful artizan, who has not been over-worked at his ordinary calling, may enter upon some special study with a zest and success which far surpass the experience of the professional student, for with him "much study is a weariness of the flesh," and an exhaustion of the mind.

What books, or parchments, beyond those of the Old Testament, He possessed, we know not. If any, they must have been few, and not of any great importance, considering that age and country. But some of the greatest men in ancient




and in modern times have risen to their high attainments, in philosophy and literature, in science and art, with the aid of very few books. Sir Thomas Browne very truly says, that "he can do most with books who can do best without them." The Law and the Prophets would certainly be the young Carpenter's special text book. And, as He studied "the lively oracles" of Psalmist and Seer, and looked into the types and shadows of the old Dispensation, and realized that He was himself the substance of them all, and the central theme of the holy volume, how his soul would be thrilled with strangely mingled feelings of fear and sadness, of joy, and hope, and triumph.

But real mental culture may be promoted by other means than books. So, there were other sources from which Jesus drew the elements of intellectual growth, power, and nobleness. His manifold experience and observation of men and things; the treasures stored up in memory, the exercise of reason and judgment, the teachings and promptings of conscience within, and the



revelations of human life and character without, supplied important springs of knowledge from which true wisdom could be derived, and the study of which could not but enlarge, refine, and elevate his mind. Then there was Nature's illuminated volume spread out before him with all its wondrous and fascinating revealments, affording fertile fields of study. His discourses testify that his heart throbbed in unison and sympathy with that of nature. The situation of Nazareth was finely adapted to satisfy the poetic taste and yearnings of one who loved nature so intensely. Jerome called it "The flower of Galilee," and compared it to a rose opening its corolla. It was encircled with a belt of fifteen mountains, many of them celebrated in sacred song and story. The basin which they formed and guarded was the valley of Jezreel; a great plain, some fifteen miles square, which has been the arena where many battles, between the armies of various nations, have been fought and won in ancient and in modern times. From the hill above the village He could feast his eyes upon a

glorious landscape stretching away to the South and West, waving with verdure, luxuriant with golden harvests, and glowing with the beauties of its many-coloured flowers. To the South-west rose the ridge of Carmel, robed with the excellency of its grand old forests. South and East, with vegetation on its shoulders, and baldness on its crown, stood little Hermon ; and, not far off, clothed with verdure to the summit, stood Mount Tabor, like a lone, majestic sentinel keeping solemn watch and ward over the fertile vale of Jordan, and the Galilean lake lying on its Eastern side. Northward towered the ranges of Lebanon, chief of which the true Hermon reared his head, and shed from his hoary locks the precious dew to refresh the plains beneath. While far away to the North-west the Mediterranean Sea could be seen flashing in the sunlight, and opening up a highway to all the ends of the earth, along which should, ere long, be carried his gospel of salvation to every nation under Heaven. And when night veiled with her shadows the grandeur of those earthly scenes



it was only to reveal one more glorious and enrapturing still. Then the blue sublime above him was lit up with the splendours of the starry hosts, till the vast concave throbbed with the pulsings of their ethereal fires. Amid these scenes He grew into manhood. From them He gathered much of that nobility of mind that distinguished him; and drew from them those charming pictures which are so thickly set, like gems in his discourses, to illustrate great spiritual truths.

In pleading for the elevation of working-men, Ebenezer Elliott exclaims—

“O give them taste ! It is the link
That binds us to the skies :
A bridge of rainbows thrown across
This gulf of tears and sighs.”

More eloquently and appropriately does that quiet, earnest, thoughtful life of Jesus appeal to young men to use the means that God has placed within their reach to refine and exalt their mental nature. “Those sinless years that breathed beneath the Syrian blue,” urge them to study the written revelation of Jehovah; and

to cultivate a loving communion with nature in her varied moods and aspects, that they may discover the harmony into which these two voices blend to proclaim the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God; that so they may improve their tastes, enlarge their hearts, and increase their pleasures; feeling all that is beautiful, and enjoying all that is grand and true and good as a Divine love-feast for the soul.

With a view to such results, let young men select trades that are favourable to mental improvement, that afford opportunity to think, and acquire useful information, and which will give them leisure hours in which to prosecute some important study as the means of self-culture, and as a training for future and wider usefulness. It was with this end in view that Hugh Miller selected the trade of a stone mason; and from that wise decision there came rich rewards to himself in the form of intellectual power, and of literary and scientific influence: and thereby invaluable additions were made to the sum of human knowledge and en-

joyment, as well as fresh treasures presented to the cabinet of literature. Having secured such advantages, it becomes young men to make the most of them while they can. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." How earnestly does our Elder Brother look down upon his younger brethren, longing to see them working with a will at the cultivation of their minds, and striving to reach the stature of intellectual manhood! Let employers encourage, in every possible way, their apprentices and workmen to cultivate to the utmost of their ability their mental and moral powers. By such sympathy and encouragement they will do much to convert this world, which has been termed "The paradise of fools," into the wise man's paradise, where trees of righteousness shall grow, and flowers and fruits of truth and goodness shall abound.



The King of Men in Spiritual Culture.



“Like Christ in all things we must prove
His life our model, and his love
The only pure unfailing spring
Of holiness in everything,—
The only law by which we e’er
Can do our Father’s business here.”

Monsell.



CHAPTER V.

THE KING OF MEN IN SPIRITUAL CULTURE.



THOUGH they mutually aid each other, and may be beautifully blended into one, there is a distinction between intellectual and spiritual culture which must be clearly understood before we can have before our minds the Divine ideal of manhood. You have a tree in your garden, with sturdy trunk and lengthy limbs, supported on wide-spread and firmly set roots. So far it is complete. But as you view it in the winter months, all black and leafless, you are not satisfied with it as a perfect tree ; for in that state alone it does not fulfil the purpose


of its existence. When the spring comes, and makes it beautiful with leaf and blossom, you are gladdened with the progress it has made in the development of its nature ; but it has not yet attained perfection. It is only in the autumn, when its arms bend with loads of luscious fruit, that your ideal of a perfect tree is realized.

So mere intellectualism, though an important stage in the unfolding of the mind, if it is unaccompanied with something higher, will prove an imperfect species of culture, producing a sadly defective type of man. With all the poetic genius, scientific attainments, political sagacity, and literary accomplishments of a Goethe, the mind may lack faith, love, and reverence toward God. And when He is not worshipped ; when his fellowship is not cultivated, and his glory not regarded ; when the heart is not animated with sympathy for the ignorant and distressed, and with every movement that seeks to bless humanity, the man, though mighty in intellect, is like a tree that puts forth buds and leaves, and nothing more ;—great only in its proportions


and sterility—a failure in regard to the highest purposes of his being.

Man is a religious being: having faculties, capacities, tendencies and wants, aspirations and responsibilities, which connect him with the Infinite One as his Father and king, his Saviour and Judge. If, then, he is to become a real man, with a character worthy of himself as a son of God, and an heir of immortality, his religious nature must be specially cultivated, for it is the crowning glory of his manhood. If, he is to be a true man, he must stand in right relations, and live on right terms with God. The history of humanity presents no spectacle more melancholy than that of “intellect without God;” of men with high-born genius, splendid talents, and rare acquirements, whose spiritual aspirations have been smothered, or fixed on things transitory and perishable; or whose religious sentiments have been so perverted as to rise no higher than to vague abstractions, or mere hero-worship. Solomon was the wisest man the world had ever seen. He had a highly

cultivated intellect. He could talk and write about all things that grew upon the earth, "from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." He was the author of thousands of proverbs, the result of keen observation and profound thought; and he possessed wealth and fame unequalled: but he failed in the culture of his spiritual life; and his bitter experience evoked the heart-breaking cry that shall ever express the disappointment and disgust of all who forget God and their soul's immortal weal, when they awake to a sense of their folly and their sin—"All is vanity and vexation of spirit!" The fact that his sun finally went down behind a cloud, remains as a solemn warning to the men of all times to beware of cultivating only a part of their nature. His history plainly teaches us that the religious is the chief element of our being; and that, therefore, the culture of those powers and capacities which connect us specially with God, and constitute the supreme dignity of souls, is a prime and imperative duty.




The inference that Jesus, through youth and manhood, paid special attention to this culture of the higher life, is both legitimate and well-founded; and the proofs are not difficult to find. "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." He in whose heart this fear reigns, not only departs from evil, but is animated by the spirit of holy reverence and sincere worship, which brings him into the most sacred relations and hallowed communion with his Heavenly Father. When, therefore, we are informed that "Jesus grew in wisdom" as He grew in years, we are plainly taught that his was a life of spiritual culture and progress. This is the true wisdom. In the exercise of this wisdom the soul is brought under the Divine influences which make it pure and strong; is consecrated to the service, and assimilated to the nature of God. The Psalmist says that "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will show them his covenant;" "and the meek will He teach his way." The Son of Man had proved in his experience the



truth of these words. Through fellowship with God He was "filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." "The things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned;" and "he that is spiritual discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man." Among the high and deep things of the Divine Spirit Jesus was constantly at home. His whole history shows that He lived in the most exalted sphere of thought and feeling, of aim and effort. He and his Father were one; and, because of that unity, He viewed all men and things, all principles and movements, in their spiritual aspects and relations. The spirituality of his mind is vividly illustrated in his teaching. His chief themes were, God and the soul, duty and privilege, character and destiny. He was constantly revealing the heart and will of God to men, claiming for him their spiritual worship, and pointing out the way by which He had made it possible for them to enjoy his friendship, and the blessed life, here and hereafter,—the portion of all those who live on right terms with him.


We learn on the best authority that He was a man of prayer. He seems to have had stated seasons of retirement from the world for holding undisturbed communion and intimate intercourse with God. He spent weeks alone with God in the wilderness after his baptism, and just before commencing his public ministry. Frequently we read such simple but significant sentences as these,—“He went into a desert place, and there prayed;” “He went into a mountain to pray.” And, after a record is given of many trials on the previous day, it is added, “And rising up a great while before day, He departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” When the people by force sought to take him and make him a king, He retired to hold communion with God in prayer. On the night of his betrayal He offered up his great intercessory prayer on behalf of his followers. In the dread agony of Gethsemane, He prayed again and again in awful earnestness, while the crimson drops oozed from his veins, and baptized the ground where He lay. In all the references



which the Evangelists make to this habit, you feel that you are catching bright and blessed glimpses of the natural and spontaneous outcome of a life wholly at one with God ; and that the revelation thus made of his inner spirit, affects altogether the human side of his nature.

The evident relish with which He observed these exercises indicates that it was not when He entered on his public career that He suddenly adopted this practice. It had been his habit before ; and, therefore, it was an easy and a natural one in which He continued to delight. It was essential to his spiritual life. It was one of the indispensable means through the use of which He drew down grace, wisdom, and strength from above, to nurture his youth into manhood, and to fit him for his future work. Infinitely more than He, do we thus need to keep ourselves in vital contact with the source of light, and love, and power. In view of the myriad temptations, stern and mighty, to which we are here subjected, we cannot but feel our utter weakness ; and when we confront the spiritual

foes that beset our upward path, and threaten our destruction, we cannot but be impressed with a sense of our total insufficiency to fight, single-handed and alone, the solemn battle of life. We need One who can perfect his strength in our weakness, and make his grace sufficient for us, and bring us off more than conquerors. And, when we pray in the name of the One Mediator, we feel that we hold God by the hand; and we rejoice to find that greater is He that is with us than all that can be against us. For this end we require often to obey his invitation,—“Come apart and rest awhile;” that through private meditation and prayer, we may be made meet for Christian usefulness, having our nature “changed from glory to glory” by communion with him. We live in an age of high pressure; an age “when every hour must sweat its sixty minutes to the death” in the pursuit of wealth, of sensuous enjoyments, or of earthly science;—an age in which we all run a fearful risk of neglecting to cultivate the life of God in the soul. Alas, what multitudes live as




if God and the soul had no existence, or sustained no relation to each other ! If we would be true men, and have our souls in a healthy and thriving state, we must keep them closely bound to the heart, the hand, and the throne of God, by the secret, invisible, and mysterious chain of lowly, childlike, and believing prayer. How happy the hearts ! how dignified the lives ! how mighty would be the influence of working men, were they in such a state as this !

We know there are many men so enraptured and deluded by the positive sciences as to have lost all faith in a personal God ;—and “advanced thinkers” have advanced so far, and become so daring as to sneer at the folly of prayer, as an absurd attempt to have the fixed laws of nature changed in favour of the weak but presumptuous petitioner. They believe only in that which can be apprehended by their senses ; and which by their instruments they can count and measure, weigh, and analyze ; and this in an age unsurpassed for the disclosures made in the wide fields of nature of the Almighty

power and infinite wisdom that created and sustains the world !

“ For this hath Science searched on weary wing,
By shore and sea, each mute and living thing ?
Or round the sky her living chariot driven,
And wheeled her triumph through the Signs of heaven ?
O, star-eyed science, hast thou wandered there
To waft us back the message of despair ! ”

That there is no living God in the wide universe who can hear our cry, or answer our appeal ;—no personal friend, more than human, to feel for us in our woe, and help us in our need ;—no Father in Heaven into whose ear we can pour in confidence our childlike complaint, and from whose hand we may expect the supply of our needs ;—that, while we who are parents care for our offspring, we have no parent, as souls, to care for us ;—that we are helpless orphans in a God-deserted world ; and that, when we stretch forth our hands, and raise our voices in prayer, we utter vain petitions to infinite space, or to that vast mechanism of material things termed “ the stupendous whole of nature,” with its mighty brainless forces, and its mindless, heart-



less, and inexorable laws? Has it come to this? To all such teachers of "science falsely so-called" we reply in the words of the Psalmist,—"Ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry."

Jesus Christ knew more about the physical structure and laws of the universe than all the scientists that ever lived, or yet shall be; for "by him God made the worlds." "By him and for him all things were created; and in him all things subsist." And HE, the Man of faultless intellect and stainless life,—the only perfect Man our earth has ever seen—his enemies themselves being judges—believed in a personal God and Father, the hearer and answerer of prayer; and he put his faith into his deeds, and taught his followers to imitate his example. Prayer was his "vital breath" and his "native air." We prefer his faith and teaching to the negative creed and practice of these modern prophets of

despair. We cannot err in believing and acting as He did. He got answers to his prayers: and so do we, when, in the right spirit, pleading his promise and his name, and exercising filial trust in our Heavenly Father's power and willingness to bless, we raise our supplications to the throne of grace. We realize that it is no vain thing to draw nigh to God: in doing so we feel that He draws near to us, and we are blessed of him.

We have no difficulty, therefore, in believing that his hand can touch the secret springs of nature, and suspend, re-arrange, or re-enforce the laws of the universe, in order to answer prayer for the accomplishment of great spiritual purposes. Though miracles occur only at rare intervals, they are not to be regarded as arbitrary violations of the laws of nature, but rather as the most striking illustrations of agreement with these laws. If a mechanic, by dint of calculation and contrivance, can make a clock which will tell the days of the month so exactly that, when the month has thirty days, the pointer passes over the thirty-first, and rests on the first

of the month following; and, when it comes to the twenty-eighth of February, passes from that on to the first of March; and every fourth year will register the 29th of February, and then indicate the first of March as the day that succeeds it,—why should not the omnipotent and all-wise Architect of the Universe have been capable of constructing the system of nature so that, here and there, in the roll of the ages, and the movements of his marvellous creation, an extra event should transpire in perfect harmony with the ordinary operations of natural laws? To question this is to limit the foresight, skill, and power of God, and is to exalt the creature above the Creator. In the mechanism of the moral and material worlds He has made provision for the exercise of prayer; and for giving extraordinary expressions of his power, wisdom, and love, as his answer to the cry of the believing soul; and that without producing the slightest discord amid the general harmony of nature's laws—which laws, after all, are but the modes in which He works his sovereign will.

When, therefore, sceptics accuse us of trying to induce God to alter his plan of the universe in answer to our petitions, and say with Pope—

“ Think ye, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause
Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws ?
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease, if you go by ? ”

We reply that the charge is baseless ; for we only ask him to bless us in accordance with his own wise and gracious arrangements, in which prayer finds a prominent place, and fulfils a most important condition of his giving, and of our receiving, priceless blessings. We cannot make a mistake in obeying the conditions which He has imposed upon us ; for then He honours the conditions which He has imposed upon himself in relation to us. Earnest souls in all ages have found this true ; and the humblest Christian now has proved by his experience that God still hears and answers prayer. No sophistry can overthrow the logic of such facts.

We delight to picture to ourselves the Young Carpenter, in his quiet hours, seeking his much-loved oratory ; and, like Nathanael, under the

shadow of some secluded fig tree, unseen by human eyes, holding converse with his Father in Heaven. Since his experience, and that of all true Christians, unite in testifying that

“ More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of ;”

and since God stands to us in such loving, fatherly relations, waiting and anxious to bless, yearning to have the opportunity of satisfying us with the fatness of his house, and the rivers of his own pleasures, we may well ask, in all tenderness and solemnity,—


“ What are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

We have seen that “the message of despair” preached by scientific materialists is solemnly condemned by the words and deeds of Jesus, who knew nature and its laws infinitely better than they. We observe still farther that

He was a true lover of nature. His heart beat

in sympathy with nature. It was sympathy of the highest order, because it was *spiritual*. How the joyous carols of the birds, and the liquid music of the streams must have gladdened his heart ! How the new-born glories of the rising morn, flushing with rosy hues the mist-wreathed brows of the everlasting hills, and gleaming in the countless myriads of dewy diamonds that trembled on the leaves of trees, the bosom of flowers, and the blades of grass : how the lingering radiance of departing day, as it burnished river, lake, and sea, and fringed the mountain and the cloud till they glowed like the closing eyelids of the sun, must have stirred the depths, and thrilled the sensitivities of his being ; and fanned into a flame his love and admiration of the beautiful and sublime !

To him, the material universe existed for the sake of the spiritual purposes which it is fitted so wondrously to serve. Creation was to him a vast gallery of pictures, illustrating the grandest spiritual truths. He viewed all nature on its Divine side, and in its relations to the human



soul. To him, the birds of the air were flying sermons—wisdom on the wing—teaching the fatherly providence of God ; and urging men to trust in him and do good, so should they dwell in the land and be fed. To him, the mustard tree, in the contrast between itself and the seed from which it sprang, was a representation of the kingdom of heaven on earth in its self-expanding power and widely-sheltering capacity ; and the barren fig tree was the emblem of a soul fruitless in good works. He marked how the corn fared on the various soils on which it was sown ; some choked by the thorns ; some picked up by the fowls ; some scorched by the sun ; some rising into life, waving in beauty, and bearing its hundred-fold ; and He found in all these things vivid types of human character, and the different receptions and results of Gospel truth in the hearts and lives of the different classes to whom it is addressed. He saw in the yellow harvest fields a symbol of the world standing waiting for the reapers to gather in souls to the harvest home of God ; and He

made them appeal to his followers to go forth as workers together with him, seeking to save the lost through the preaching of his Gospel, for want of which the world was perishing. In the corn of wheat, cast into the furrow, and dying under ground, yet through death bursting into a fuller life, and bearing "much fruit," He found a striking illustration of his own sacrificial death, and its final issues. Through all ages nature had, in this way, been proclaiming the need, the meaning, and the results of his atonement for human sin; but He had to come and interpret her mute symbols and parabolic teachings before men could understand them. In the motherly hen, as she uttered the cry of alarm, and extended her sheltering wings to shield her offspring from the bird of prey, He realized the vivid emblem of himself as He yearned to gather Jerusalem-sinners under the protection of his power and love, to shield them from the Roman eagles, and to save them from eternal woe. In the beautiful Oriental lilies that gemmed the fields of Palestine, and waved

so gracefully among the tall grass and prickly thorns, He found lessons of highest wisdom for men and women. By the eloquence of their beauty, and the expressive silence of their humility, they mocked the tinselled glory of the grandest king; and summoned human beings to trust in the unchanging goodness of Jehovah as the Father of their spirits. This insight into the spiritual aspects and teachings of nature, and this method of interpreting her silent symbols, for which He was distinguished, have lent a new charm to the works of creation; and have breathed a fresh and vitalizing power into Christian literature which, with all their attractions, is unfelt in the classics of Greece and Rome. Mr Ruskin says,—“I do not know that, of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual part of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned, her teachings through both they understood never.” But since Christ


lived and taught among men, all nature seems vocal with momentous spiritual truths ; so that now, for a thoughtful Christian, the same writer declares, "It is not possible to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from stone, flower, leaf or sound, nor without a sense of dew falling upon him out of the sky."

Only as we drink in the spirit which animated Jesus, and use the key which He has put into our hands, can we truly read "the testimony of the rocks," of the flowers and trees, of the streams and stars, so as to "rise through nature up to nature's God ;" and grow in soul through fellowship with him. Nor let it be forgotten that it was not when He stood forth as the Great Teacher that He began to take pleasure in studying the parabolic revelations of the natural world. To do so would be to lose sight of one of the finest aspects of his humanity. It was during those long and quiet years of a rural workman's life that He pursued the spiritual

study of nature amid the soul-stirring scenes of his native land ; and enriched his mind with such treasures of wisdom as justified him in affirming, " Behold a greater than Solomon is here ! " and which constrained the officers, sent to apprehend him, when the rulers asked, " Why have ye not brought him ? " to say, " Never man spake like this man ! " If Nature is to fulfil her mission as a Divine minister to us, we must live under the baptism of that spirit which He breathed in all his communings with her. Oh for hosts of workmen-naturalists after the type of the Carpenter of Nazareth ! They would be men indeed !

He was also a devout student of Scripture. In a spiritual mood, and for spiritual ends, He pondered carefully the sacred page. He was an intellectual student of the Bible ; but He was not satisfied with merely knowing its historical facts, its doctrines and precepts ; nor with revel-ling in its matchless poetry. He stored his memory with its truths, and laid up in his understanding the lessons they enforced ; and


yielded up his heart and life in loving allegiance to their imperial claims. He slaked the thirst of his soul at the wells of living water which his Father's hand had there opened. In tracing its inspired pages, every sentence, like the bush as it appeared to Moses, seemed to him to burn with Deity. He found his Father there. He saw there the gradual outworking of His Father's purposes of redeeming grace toward our lost world; and rejoiced to see that, through himself, as the revealer of the Father, these purposes were to be fulfilled. With prophet, and with poet, He would soar aloft on the wings of a sanctified imagination, delighting himself in the Lord; and, rapt into the far future, would joyfully anticipate the glories of the millennium with which, as the outcome of his mediatorial mission, He would yet encircle this sun-stricken world. Studying the written Word in this way, and throwing open his soul to the inflow of the Divine and Divinely ennobling influences which it pours forth in exhaustless fulness into all minds that come seeking to know through it their personal



relations to God, He found it to be a never-failing fountain of spiritual life and power. It was by the power and wisdom which He drew therefrom, while He was the working man, that He was enabled to foil the tempter in the wilderness, just before He started on his public work. He replied to the daring attempts of Satan to seduce him into sin with three apt and telling quotations from Holy Writ, which defeated the wiles of the subtle foe, and made him slink abashed from the presence of the Divine Man. His familiarity with the words and spirit of Scripture is apparent all through his teaching ; and, by the way in which He applies the words that He quotes, the spirituality of his mind, and of his practical design, are very obvious.

It is well, so far, to read and study the Bible for intellectual purposes, and in order to gratify a literary taste. Its history, philology, and theology will make you scholars ; and its rich fields of poetry will furnish feasts for your imagination unequalled in literature. But to stop short there is to miss the pearl of great price which


it contains; and is to be satisfied with the outward beauties of the casket in which it is enshrined. Alas, that it should be so with so many scholarly men; but so it is. This is all that they have attained in Bible study, while multitudes of the illiterate poor have there found God revealed as the portion of their souls. It was this which made the Book so precious to our Elder Brother while He was a working man. It is at once the duty and the privilege of all working men to be spiritually-minded like him who is not ashamed to call them brethren; and who intensely desires to see them going from strength to strength on the ever-ascending path of Christian progress. The command is this—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." But the possession of this mind will depend, to a vast extent, upon their intimate and spiritual knowledge of the thoughts and feelings, the will and ways of God, revealed in Holy Scripture. He knew this; therefore He said,—“Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they



which testify of me." The Book that reveals to him such a Heavenly Father, and of which such a Brother is the central theme, his friend in need, his Advocate and Saviour, should be dear to the heart of every son of toil.

He also observed regularly the public ordinances of Religion. As a son of Abraham he was bound to visit Jerusalem as a worshipper at the three great annual feasts; and there is every reason to believe that He made it a matter of conscience to obey the Divine command on this important point, as on every other. It was also his custom to attend the services of the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath day, that He might join in the worship, and get the blessing which God dispenses to his assembled saints who thus "keep holy day." We are told that, shortly after He had commenced his ministry, "He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up; and, as his custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read." It would appear from these words that He had formerly been in the

habit of taking a public part in the services of the sanctuary as the *anagnostes*, or reader of the Scriptures ; for it is added, "there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias ;" and He proceeded to read part of the lesson for the day, which was his own commission as the Messiah promised to the fathers. We have here a rebuke to the sacerdotalism that refuses to allow any man to officiate in the House of God on whose head a prelate's hands have not been laid ; for it was not as the anointed of God that He was asked to take part in the services, but simply as an ordinary member of the congregation, and one whom every one knew as only "The Carpenter." It is thus apparent that there was no gap in his religious life. He turned all his spiritual powers and religious privileges to the best account. His was a beautifully rounded and complete life. How it calls on all who are his toiling brothers to avail themselves of all the services of the Christian Church, and the means of grace, to perfect the growth of their spiritual life, and to make them more efficient sources of



blessings to others ! If He needed such helps, much more do they ; and if He prized them so highly, they should esteem them beyond all price. Those who esteem them lightly dishonour him, and sin against their own souls.

The spiritual life of the man Christ Jesus could not but reveal itself in practical efforts to bless his fellow-men ; and those efforts could not but react with a salutary force, imparting increased vigour and fruitfulness to that life ; and verifying his own words—"To every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." He who possessed such a life, and wrought out such a character, could not be otherwise than useful in the limited sphere which He filled as a working man. Those who laboured with him in the carpenter's shop, as well as his relatives and other friends, must have felt that He was a spiritual power in their midst. That life even though it had been a silent life, could not but tell upon them for good. One so thoughtful, intelligent, and spiritual must have had ever at command all the springs of the purest and

highest bliss. Happy in himself, He could not but seek to make others happy also. He could not keep from speaking a word in season to him that was weary, and that needed comfort and guidance. It was for this purpose that "grace was poured into his lips," and that "God had given him the tongue of the learned." We must, therefore, believe that He did his best to lead all within the scope of his influence into the path of peace and the way of holiness. There are men who have never been known to be spiritually useful till they assumed the official positions of teachers and preachers; who never in private opened their lips on behalf of God and his Gospel; and never sought to lead a wandering soul back to his Heavenly Father, to live at home with him. We cannot imagine the Son of Man to have been a man of such a stamp as that. He must have been an active spring-tide of blessing to all around him. It is not the record of a newly-formed habit which we find in the words relating to his public life,—“He went about doing good.” That habit had been

formed in his early years, and earnestly cultivated during his carpenter life at Nazareth. When He emptied himself of his glory, became so poor, and cheerfully passed through such a course of training to qualify him to be our pattern and our Saviour, we must have had a warm place in his heart. He must have set a high value upon us. Surely we are worth more to him than to ourselves! How ambitious we should be to love and serve him, and to attain the fulness of the stature of perfect manhood in Christ!


“JESUS! There is no name so dear as thine
Which Time has blazoned on his mighty scroll;
No wreaths or garlands ever did entwine
So fair a temple of so vast a soul.

“There every virtue set his triumph seal;
Wisdom conjoined with strength and radiant grace,
In a sweet copy Heaven to reveal,
And stamp Perfection on a mortal face.

“Once on the earth wert Thou, before men’s eyes,
That did not half thy beauteous brightness see;
E’en as the emmet does not rend the skies,
Nor our weak orbs look through immensity;—
Once on the earth wert Thou, a living shrine,
Wherein conjoining dwelt the Good, the Lovely, the
Divine.”


Let working men only court his acquaintance;
imbibe his spirit; lay hold on his strength;

receive his grace ; practise his principles ; copy his example ; and walk in his footprints amid the sinful temptations of the workshop, the conflict for daily bread, and all the trials of their daily lot, and He will enable them to live a life Divine and beautiful, and make them mighty in blessing others. They may be happier than kings. They may be better Christians, and wiser scholars in the knowledge of spiritual things, and more useful to the Church and to the world, than many who plume themselves on being "the successors of the Apostles." They know not what happy, noble, useful men Christ can make them, if they would only let him fulfil his earnest desire in their hearts and lives. Many, thank God, are the trophies of his saving grace and power among the working classes, whom He has owned and honoured as his witnesses and workers in drawing souls from the slavery of Satan into the fellowship and service of his Church ; but there is a sad and crying need for multitudes more to help him to win the world to himself.




We think with admiration of brave Bernard Pallissy, the illiterate Huguenot potter, studying not only the teachings of nature, and the mysteries of science and art ; but educating himself in the knowledge of Divine things ; then gathering around him a few people in his own home to break to them the bread of life ; fearing not to take the Market Hall for the purposes of Christian worship ; labouring for the glory of God and the good of men till the influence of the Protestant Church, which he had established there, became so powerful as to change not only the wicked manners of the people of Saintes, but even, it is said, their very countenances ; and that in an age when the Church in France was "a machine for burning heretics and raising tithes." May the memory of this God-made minister and working-man Reformer be ever green and fragrant.

We could tell, too, of a working-man, whose parental blood runs in our veins, whom God has so honoured in his service, that during the last thirty years, he has been instrumental in leading



about a hundred persons to their Saviour, and into fellowship with his Church. The secret of his success lay in his making it his aim to mingle with his acquaintances in leisure hours, in lending them books, and in conversing with them on the things that belonged to their eternal interests. For six years now he has been laid aside from work by severe affliction and the frailties of age; but, even in his sick chamber, he has been owned to lead some of his visitors to "the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." Would that workingmen were everywhere fired with the holy ambition to be thus honoured as workers together with God! Their pattern in this, as in all that is good, is their Elder Brother, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary.


But some may object to our pressing Jesus on their attention, and urging them to imitate him as the Model Working-Man, seeing He began life under more favourable circumstances, being sinless; while they are depraved in nature, and lost because of sin. There would be



force and sound reasoning in this objection, were there no provision made for meeting their desperate case, and rectifying the evils of their nature. But, through the mercy of God, by the sacrifice of Christ, and the poured-out influences of the Holy Spirit, all the means have been freely furnished whereby all our sins may be blotted out, our hearts renewed, and our lives ennobled and assimilated to the life of Christ. The man who throws open his heart by faith to the all-inspiring power of the love of Christ to him, so experiences the effective energy of the means provided by redeeming grace that he is made a new man; and thenceforth Christ becomes his example as well as his Saviour. A new motive power throbs in his soul, and finds expression in his life. He says, "The love of Christ constraineth me." "I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." And the abiding aspiration of his heart is so to grow in the new life, that at length he may stand perfect in the Beloved.

Young men! your Saviour has bought you

for himself with his own blood; and He has placed within your reach glorious possibilities in respect to spiritual life, culture, and usefulness. You may enjoy the truest happiness. You may possess the rarest wealth, unlimited and immortal. You may rank high among those "who hold the patent of their nobility direct from Almighty God." You may do work for him that shall last through the eternal years. "The Christian is the highest style of man." Yours, then, may be the nobility of Christian manhood, following Christ on the earth: and yours may be the perfection of that manhood, crowned by Christ in Heaven. You are the hope of the age. To you the Church looks with expectancy, not only on her own behalf, but on behalf of the world. Into your hands have come the rich legacies of the past. No generation ever before started with such advantages. Because of the privileges which you possess, the destiny of the future is in your hands. It is to be what you choose to make it. The precious legacies to which you have fallen heirs should



be so invested and improved that you shall be enabled to bequeath to the future a still grander fortune than you have inherited from the past. To you Christ and his Church appeal for help to make all things in the moral world new. By the response which you give to that appeal may the hopes which are centred in you be fulfilled, through the life of Christ being perfected in you. Under the inspiration of his strong, immortal love to you, form and cherish great, loving, Christ-like purposes for the glory of God and the good of men; cleave to them as to your very life; and ever strive as He did to incarnate them in noble deeds; and, rest assured, there is a hand above will lead you on, and crown you with success. Your work of faith and labour of love shall not be in vain in the Lord. For this end, "The Master is come, and calleth for you."


A bright prospect lies before all true Christian workers and their work. As sowers of Gospel truth, which is the seed-corn of God, He cheers them with the promise of a golden harvest. Though they toil in solemn earnestness, sowing

that precious seed, they often grieve to see such meagre results. It seems as if they had been sowing it on the surface of the flinty rock, or in the depths of the Dead Sea. In such gloomy hours and sorrowful moods, to cheer their drooping hearts, and fill them with fresh courage and diligence, comes this assurance of the Great Husbandman in whose field they toil, —“Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.” Their work shall help to swell the harvest home of heaven.

Engaged in the service of the Master Builder, they labour to draw souls from the rude quarry of Nature, to square, and polish, and build them into the living temple of the living God, which He has been rearing through the ages as a habitation for himself; but they feel that the work is hard; the progress is slow; and the completion of the building seems as far off as ever; and they are apt to grow faint and despondent. But to inspire them with new hope and zeal, and to gird them with fresh


strength, there comes this message from the Master,—“Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

It is true that the glorious temple of which Christ is the foundation, and his saints are the fabric, and in the erection of which He calls us to labour, presents, as yet, nothing like a finished aspect. We see tier on tier of intricate scaffolding rising around it, and hiding the structure from our view; and piles of stones and timber are lying waiting to be put into their proper forms and places; and that seems all. Nevertheless, within the enclosure of those vast and towering scaffolds the work goes ever on. Silently and slowly, but surely, course is laid on course; and the wondrous temple rises in strength and beauty; and, by and by, the key-stone shall be placed in the majestic dome; and the golden Cross shall be planted on its summit; the scaffolding shall be taken down; and the sacred fane shall stand forth in all its grandeur, the admiration of the universe, while the welkin shall ring with shoutings of



“Grace, grace unto it!” Then shall it be declared that your work of faith and labour of love has helped to rear that living monument to the glory of Jesus Christ. The prospect of such a consummation should make you toil on in hope, and sing as you work; for while you help to rear that temple you are really building better than you know. The Master will establish the work of your hands, and crown it with success. Those whom He owns in working out his great practical purposes of redeeming love among men are to share in his triumph, his glory, and his joy. When He says in presence of an assembled universe to all who have done earnest, honest work for him, and have thus helped to realise his grand design in human redemption, “Well done!”—that will be to them sufficient reward for all service they ever rendered unto him.

Brothers, “forgetting the things that are behind, reach forth unto those that are before.” It is better on. You shall breathe a purer atmosphere; you shall live a nobler life;



you shall render a loftier service; you shall sing a sweeter song; and in all that is true, and beautiful, and good you shall make unbroken progress through the Blessed Evermore. Press on till you grasp the prize of your high calling, and enjoy the destiny of the just made perfect in the heavens. The prospect of that destiny held out to you in the Gospel ought to inspire your hearts, and make them dance with joy to the music of a deathless song; and should nerve you for grander deeds in the service of your Saviour while you live on earth. You have much to do for him; and little time to do it. Strive, while your brief day lasts, by the aid of grace Divine, to make "the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose." Sing at your work the songs of faith, and hope, and Fatherland, to banish your griefs, and to lighten your toils; so that when you are summoned to come up higher the chorus of attendant angels will welcome you into Heaven; an abundant entrance will be ministered unto you into the everlasting king-

dom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;
and with all the ransomed throng you shall
have the joy of serving him day and night in
his temple, and of making it resound through
the eternal ages with the anthem of his praise.

Till then may the spirit of consecration
and loyalty to him so possess your hearts that
you shall glorify him in your bodies and spirits
which are his ; and with grateful souls, with
tuneful lips, and with holy lives, continually
sing,—

“ UNTO

HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US

FROM OUR SINS IN HIS

OWN BLOOD ;

AND HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

UNTO

GOD AND HIS FATHER ;

TO

HIM BE GLORY

AND DOMINION FOR EVER,

AND EVER,

AMEN.”

L' E N V O I.



"STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

"Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest life in man and brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, Thy foot
Is on the skull that Thou hast made.

"Thou seemest human and Divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, Thou :
Our wills are ours we know not how ;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

Tennyson.

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